

People's War, People's Press: History and Evolution of *Ang Bayan (The People)*, the News Organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)

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Due to the pivotal role of the press in revolutions, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) released its official publication *Ang Bayan (The People)* just months after it was re-established on December 26, 1968. CPP founding chairperson Jose Maria Sison used only a few typewriters and one mimeograph machine to write the first issue of *Ang Bayan*, published on May 1, 1969. For almost half a century, *Ang Bayan* was the CPP's propagandist, agitator, and organizer. It was instrumental to establish and to maintain party unity and to popularize Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideals. It simultaneously provided alternative news and perspective, especially during the martial law years, and inspired the rise of more revolutionary publications. The advent of the digital age also prompted the CPP to wage its revolution online. By recruiting members from the information technology sector and providing computer literacy training, *Ang Bayan* was first accessed online in 1998 on the National Democratic Front (NDF) website. *Ang Bayan* established its own website in 1999.

Keywords: *Underground press, Revolutionary Press, Marxism in the Philippines, Communist Party of the Philippines*

Introduction

Every two weeks, red fighters and members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in remote guerilla bases nationwide lay down their arms, literally. They comb their armory for silkscreen and ink to create their weapon of mass propaganda and agitation: *Ang Bayan (The People)*. Producing the new issue takes one or two days, depending on the number of stencils and the print run. Other variables include the availability of stencil ink and the security situation in the community. In another part of the globe, a CPP sector based in the United States only needs to click the website of the CPP to download the latest issue. The latest issue of the news organ can be sent or shared with sympathizers and allies at the speed of light.

These are the two phases of reproducing an underground newspaper: the traditional and the digital. The convergence of these media platforms reflect how *Ang Bayan* evolved during almost five decades of publication. Maintaining the old-fashion "guerilla-type" printing depicts how the revolutionary movement reaches the majority of its readers in the countryside

who have no access to electricity, let alone the internet. The movement also reaches its growing recruits and allies among professionals, students, and overseas Filipinos. Published biweekly and originally written in Filipino and English, *Ang Bayan*, is also translated in Hiligaynon, Cebuano and Ilocano.

Ang Bayan chronicles the victories and challenges of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement in the Philippines, including the history of the party from a handful of young Marxists to several thousand members. It also documented the rise of new revolutionaries from different sectors: teachers, government employees, artists, religious, women, and the youth. It voiced the people's cry for genuine land reform, higher wages, better working and living conditions, justice, and a lasting peace.

Ang Bayan has also survived various challenges during its almost five decades of publication. The repressive years of Martial Law made printing and circulation difficult because of security risks. The change in editors following the arrest of top CPP leaders also led to changes in the journalistic style. The publication survived the tactical errors, political blunders, and purging operations of the revolutionary movement.

This study traces the history of a newspaper that has served as the voice of revolutionaries when mainstream publications were censored. Underground publications have been conspicuously invisible in literature on the press after the Period of Liberation. This study also highlights the contributions of a newspaper to the people's war.

Methodology

Due to the security risks of conducting face-to-face interviews, the main research method used in this study was the online structured interview. Founding chairman of the CPP Jose Maria Sison, who is now based in the Netherlands, was interviewed online. The CPP Information Bureau based in Metro Manila was also interviewed online. Former National Democratic Front Peace Negotiator Carolina Malay also shared her experiences as former writer and editor of *Ang Bayan* through an online interview.

The study also includes reviews of the original copies of *Ang Bayan*. The original mimeographed issues of *Ang Bayan* were hardly readable and several issues produced during Martial Law were confiscated and lost during military raids of safe houses following the arrests of CPP leaders. CPP members, who wanted to avoid being caught with subversive documents, burned other copies. The copies that managed to survive Martial Law did not survive Typhoon Ondoy in 2009.

Party documents and directives were also reviewed for this article. Majority of the important CPP documents are now available online.

Birth of Ang Bayan

Jose Maria Sison or “Joma” was a graduate student and an instructor at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, when he joined the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP) [Communist Party of the Philippines] in December 1962 upon the invitation of then PKP general secretary Jesus Lava. At that time, the party was so small it could not yet establish a single branch. At the age of 23, Sison joined a five-man executive committee tasked to revive the party. They were also responsible for the youth movement, providing refresher courses for senior workers and peasant farmers. Sison used the nom de guerre Amado Guerrero [Beloved Warrior] and founded the *Kabataan Makabayan* [Patriotic Youth], the youth organization involved in the First Quarter Storm and the Diliman Commune in the 1970s. Sharp ideological divisions between Marxist-Leninists and the Lava revisionists prompted Sison and other proletarian revolutionaries to reestablish the CPP (“Interview with Com. Jose Sison,” 2000).

On December 26, 1968, Sison launched the CPP, with himself as the founding chairperson under the guidance of the theory of Marxism-Leninism and following the general line of national democratic revolution. After three months, on March 29, 1969, the CPP established its military arm, the New People’s Army, in the second district of Tarlac province. The NPA started with 60 fighters armed with 9 automatic rifles, 26 single-shot rifles, and handguns to defend a base of around 80,000 peasants (Liwana, 1988).

Aside from the CPP’s ideological and military needs, Sison also felt the urgency of producing propaganda to further the revolution. Together with the CPP Central Committee, he published a central organ for disseminating news, articles and documents.

We considered it necessary to have a periodical for propagating our basic principles and program for a people’s democratic revolution, for reporting the activities of the Party, the NDFP and the united front, for arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people and for exposing and opposing US domination and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords. In the history of modern revolutions, bourgeois or proletarian, the periodical is a necessity (Sison, personal communication, April 7, 2015).

The maiden issue of *Ang Bayan* was published on May 1, 1969 in Central Luzon. Although no copy of the first issue is available in the Philippines, its format closely resembled the first few issues. The earliest design used the

hammer and sickle and rifle logo, and the slogan, "*Pahayangan ng Partido Komunista Ng Pilipinas Pinapatnubayan ng Kaisipang Mao Tsetung.*" [New Organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines Guided by Mao Zedong Thought] Volume 1 number 2 was dated July 1, 1969 and Vol. 1 Number 3 was dated August 1, 1969. Printed using mimeograph machines and mimeograph paper, *Ang Bayan* had four major sections: the editorials, local news, international news, and CPP documents.

The editorial section contains a publication's stand on certain issues. Usually found inside the fold, newspapers rarely publish their editorial on the front page unless the issue or topic is extremely important. From its earliest days, *Ang Bayan* has always published its editorial on page one, occupying the first few pages depending on the length of the editorial. This practice continues today. This shows how the Central Committee wants its members to be informed about the party's stand on important issues. For instance in Vol. 1 Number 2, the editorial focused on the significance of the holding of the first Plenum of the CPP "under the supreme guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought" ("Intensify Party Rebuilding," 1969, p. 1).

"Intensify Party Rebuilding and the Armed Struggle"

The holding of the Plenum of the Central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines for the first time not only since the Congress of the Re-Establishment, but since more than eighteen years ago is clearly a highly significant event indicative of the new vigorous forces of the people's democratic revolution now resurging.

However, what is most essentially significant about the First Plenum is that it is the concrete result of determined efforts by proletarian revolutionary (cadres) to integrate Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought the concrete practice of the Philippine Revolution. In this sense, the first Plenum of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the supreme guidance and inspiration of Mao Tsetung Thought is firmly in line with the Congress Re-Establishment of December 26, 1968. (p. 1)

The local news section records the people's war and other important issues related to the anti-imperialist struggle. During *Ang Bayan's* early issues, many of the local news stories were about military operations and the

victories of the CPP-NPA. Reports on crimes committed by US servicemen and US companies were also found in the local news section.

“Marcos Puppet Administration condones Abuses in U.S. Military Bases”

The puppetry of the Marcos administration, despite its protestations of initiating an “independent” foreign policy, is blatantly demonstrated by its condonation and approval of the absolute right of the U.S. imperialists to murder and exploit Filipino workers in the U.S. military bases.

A Filipino workers, Clicorio Amor, was murdered on June 10 by the U.S. imperialists inside the Subic Naval Base. Until now, the Marcos administration has not taken any step in defense of a Filipino citizen. Instead it has merely issued press statements affirming the “right” of U.S. base authorities to investigate and try the murder case under the unjust U.S.-RP Military Bases Agreement. (“Marcos Puppet Administration,” 1969, p. 9)

Ang Bayan's international section was comprehensive during its first few years. Among its favorite subjects were developments in the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, and Cuba. Developments in Marxist movements in various parts of the globe were also covered in the international section. The second issue of the publication featured 10 international news articles and occupied nine pages. The articles included, “Thai People’s Liberation Army Grows Rapidly,” “Crisis for U.S. and British Imperialism in Malaya,” and “Palestinian People’s Struggle Advances.”

The documents section was reserved for important CPP documents and policy directives. Most of such documents are long and theoretical. *Ang Bayan's* first issue included the first three parts of the document, “Rectify Errors, Rebuild the Party,” which was ratified by members during the CPP reestablishment on December 26, 1968. The 39-page document is believed to have been penned solely by Guerrero (1969). According to the Brief Review of the Communist Party of the Philippines, in 1964, Guerrero proposed a summary of the Party’s experience since 1930. He was eventually assigned by the PKP Executive Committee to write a general report, which he completed in 1966. However: Guerrero’s report was suppressed until *Ang Bayan* provided a platform for its dissemination. Guerrero criticized PKP’s ideological, political, organizational, and military errors and weaknesses.

Guerrero (1969) first claimed that Mao Zedong's thought, considered the purest application of Marxism-Leninism, serves as the supreme guide in analyzing and summarizing the experience of the CPP.

Next, Guerrero (1969) identified CPP's urgent task: to analyze its experiences as a Party in order to draw revolutionary lessons, identify errors and weaknesses, and rectify them. Only then can the Party strengthen and rebuild a revolutionary party guided by Mao Zedong thought.

Finally, Guerrero (1969) provides a concise history of the PKP from its founding on November 7, 1930 until its demise in the 1960s. Barely two years after its founding, the PKP and its mass organizations were outlawed by the Supreme Court, which resulted in the arrest and detention of leaders and sympathizers. The PKP merged with the Socialist Party (SP) in 1938. They built a massive base among peasants and agricultural workers in Central Luzon. During the Japanese occupation, on March 29, 1942, the PKP established the *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* [People's Anti-Japanese Army] in Barrio San Lorenzo in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. Betrayals and selfishness among key party leaders finally led to the collapse of the old CPP.

Sison was deeply involved in writing and editing news articles, essays, and editorials. He served as editor-in-chief of the political organ from 1969 to 1975. Despite his hectic schedule as chairperson of the revolutionary movement, Sison found time to write long articles and editorials.

As editor-in-chief, I could schedule my stay with the AB staff or be anywhere and send my pieces by courier to the staff of *Ang Bayan* which was usually in tandem with the Central Publishing House (CPH) of the CPP. My circumstances were varied from month to month and from year to year and my schedule was hectic most of the time (Sison, personal communication, April 7, 2015).

During its first few years, CPH printed 500 to 1,000 copies of *Ang Bayan*. CPH eventually reduced the print run when stencil master copies increased. These stencil copies were distributed to the regions and reproduced using V-type silkscreen. As the party grew, the number of *Ang Bayan* copies also increased significantly.

The cost of operating the revolutionary paper was very minimal. The CPP Central Committee allotted modest amount of funds for the editorial staff and the publishing house. Writers and volunteers did not received only a subsistence allowance. Other essential expenses included mimeographing

machine, paper stencils, ink, and rent of the production house unless this was provided by a comrade or ally.

Ang Bayan was distributed in various parts of the country using the CPP's organizational structure. From the CPP Central Committee, copies were delivered to the CPP regional branches, in turn charged with distributing copies in the provincial level. "Party cadres gave copies by hand to key friends in the bourgeois opposition, universities, trade unions, government offices, professional groups, religious institutions and so on," Sison recalled (personal communication, April 7, 2015). Copies were also sent by Party members to their friends and relatives in the anti-Marcos struggle overseas. This explains how the only surviving copy of the maiden issue of *Ang Bayan* ended up at a university library in the United States.

Joma's Journalistic Style

It is often said that the journalistic style and content of a newspaper reflects the personality of its editor-in-chief. Sison's writing and editing style were apparent in the central organ. From 1969 to 1972, *Ang Bayan* was more theoretical than simply a vehicle to deliver news because it published theoretical articles and documents. News articles and analyses were also titillating and replete with politically loaded terms. An example is this news article on the military victory of the NPA:

"New People's Army Scores Victories"

Every regular unit of the New People's Army in its respective local area of operation in Tarlac, Zambales, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga scored victories during the period of June 25 to July 25, consisting of the annihilation of uniformed troopers, "Monkees" and informers in groups ranging from two to seven.

During the same period, local regular units of the New People's Army eliminated four PC sergeants who had been acting as paymasters for informers at the barrio level and as extortion masterminds preying on the people in various occupations. In the course of its operations, the New People's Army captured a large number of arms and ammunitions.

In Zambales, a jeep load of reactionary puppet troopers, including an informer, was annihilated. Refusing to admit publicly the rapid expansion of the New People's Army, the

reactionary military authorities did not allow the publication of the incident in the bourgeois press. (“New People’s Army Scores Victories,” 1969, p. 6.)

A news article in the third issue reports on a shooting incident where two US servicemen were killed and two others seriously wounded by NPA red fighters. The news article defied conventional rules in journalism. It also showed how an important story was suppressed by both local and US authorities. The article also reveals how the local press was used as an instrument to conceal the truth about the incident.

“New People’s Army Punishes U.S. Imperialists”

On July 4, the New People’s Army showed that U.S. military airmen could not just enjoy wine, women and song in Angeles without being punished for their crimes inside the U.S. military bases and for their wanton bombing raids on the Vietnamese people.

Despite the Saigon atmosphere in Angeles city, with the local puppet constabulary men and police tightly guarding the city especially its sin center in Balibago where U.S. airmen on R&R enjoy themselves at the expense of Filipino womanhood, the New People’s Army penetrated enemy lines and shot four U.S. servicemen, killing two and wounding another two seriously. “

The people’s armed unit that performed this patriotic task also managed to distribute leaflets with inscription, “37 Filipinos were murdered in U.S. military bases. From now on justice will be served” (“New People’s Army Punishes US Imperialists,” 1969, p. 7).

Journalists write news reports using the inverted pyramid style where the most important details or the climax of the story are in the lead paragraph and succeeding paragraphs elaborate. Neither article cited above followed the inverted pyramid style. Journalists also follow a stylebook, a style guide to writing, spelling, and abbreviation. Neither article followed any stylebook. For instance, the New People’s Army can be spelled out on first mention but the abbreviation NPA can be used in subsequent mention. Journalists prefer short sentences and paragraphs in writing news stories.

The ideal length of a lead is between 20 to 30 words. The lead of the first article on NPA's victory in Central Luzon contains 50 words, while the lead of the news article on NPA's killing American troops contains 43 words. Journalists are required to get their information or data from reliable sources or official documents to ensure accuracy. Both articles only relied on secondary sources and on personal observation and opinion. There are no direct quotes from police investigators or public officials.

As part of ethics, journalists are required to provide facts when writing news articles. Reporters are discouraged from "editorializing" or interpreting events. This practice ensures fairness and objectivity. Both articles cited above defied this ethical consideration. The first article described PC sergeants eliminated as those "who had been acting as paymasters for informers" and as "extortion masterminds" ("New People's Army Scores Victories," 1969, p. 6). The second article stated that the US servicemen were killed as punishment for their crimes inside the U.S. military bases and for bombing raids in Vietnam. Opinions about the PC sergeants and U.S. servicemen would have been removed during the editing process.

Under Sison, *Ang Bayan* emphasized international solidarity. Several articles and analyses on the Marxist movement worldwide were included. For instance, *Ang Bayan* released a special issue dated January 28, 1973 to celebrate the end of the Vietnam War on January 27, 1973:

By virtue of their resolute revolutionary struggle, the Vietnamese people have effectively and victoriously asserted their right to self-determination. They have waged the most heroic battles and made the most astounding sacrifices in fighting for their noble cause of liberating the south, defending the north and reunifying their great Fatherland. ("Statement of the Communist Party of the Philippines on the Agreement Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," 1973, p. 1)

Although Zumel, Sison's successor, also included short news articles on international news, they were not as extensive and as numerous as those Sison published. Zumel focused instead on international events such as the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 ("Gandhi," 1984, p. 22); and the Union Carbide accident in Bhopal, India in December 1984 that killed 2,500 people and injured 125,000 ("India," 1984, p. 19).

Martial law and the underground press

The declaration of Martial Law on September 21, 1972 dealt a major blow to the mainstream press and underground publication. Journalists and publishers were arrested following the declaration of Martial Law. Many journalists also joined the revolutionary movement. President Marcos issued Presidential Decree No. 36 on November 2, 1972, which censored radio and telecommunication organizations, prohibited the creation of the Mass Media Council, and imposed new rules and regulations on the operation of mass media. Marcos justified the control by proclaiming that media “have been used for the conspiracy against the Government and have taken part in that conspiracy...by directly giving aid and comfort to the forces of insurgency and subversion seeking to overthrow the Government by organized violence” (P.D. No. 36, 1972).

Presidential Decree No. 140 issued on March 2, 1973 had a more direct impact on the circulation of *Ang Bayan*. The decree required all owners or operators of photocopying machines and equipment to register with the Philippine Constabulary. Marcos justified the regulation on copying machines because it was used “for the production of subversive propaganda materials” (P.D. 140, 1973).

While *Ang Bayan* managed to produce special issues on Martial Law in October and November 1972, there were few issues of the revolutionary newspaper during the first years of the dictatorship. Members of the Executive Committee were involved in the revolutionary movement, so printing and circulating copies of the newspaper became difficult because of militarization. Since *Ang Bayan* was considered a “subversive document,” mere possession could be used as damning evidence for conviction as a subversive. To avoid being caught, members buried their copies after reading. One former member said she hid her copies in the ceiling.

Sison’s arrest on November 9, 1977 was also a major development in the history of *Ang Bayan*. Sison was captured by combined forces of the military and then constabulary in Barrio Pagdalagan del Norte in San Fernando, La Union (Sison, personal communication April 7, 2015). He was in a transit house waiting for transport to another region when the raid occurred. The CPP founder was under maximum security detention and subject to various forms of physical and psychological torture until March 5, 1986 (“Interview with Com, Jose Maria Sison,” 2000).

Sison recalled that his torturers tried to extract information from him regarding *Ang Bayan*: “The enemy tortured me but could not force me to reveal the location of the AB. Thus, the AB personnel and equipment were intact” (personal communication, April 7, 2015), he said. In an interview with People’s March (2000), a publication by Indian revolutionaries, Sison

endured punches and water poured into his nostrils under the hands of the enemy. The worst psychological torture that he received was when he was chained to a cot in a small cell. He was in solitary confinement for five years. Since Antonio Zumel was editor-in-chief since 1976, *Ang Bayan* did not suffer any major setback following Sison's arrest: "My detention did not adversely affect the publication of AB, except probably for a few months, when the AB had to adjust its personnel and situation" (personal communication, April 7, 2015), he said.

Period of Reform Under Zumel

In 1976, Sison ceded the editorship of *Ang Bayan* to Antonio Zumel, a veteran journalist and organizer. Although his work with *Ang Bayan* was greatly reduced with Zumel's appointment, Sison continued to play a key role in the publication as its political director.

Zumel started as a copy boy for the *Philippine Herald*, eventually working his way up to sports editor. After 16 years, he was pirated by the *Manila Bulletin*. Because of his involvement in organizing journalists and press workers, he became the president of the National Press Club from 1969 to 1971. He went underground with the declaration of Martial Law in September 1972.

With 18 years of experience in journalism under his belt, Zumel introduced various reforms to improve the underground publication. First, he expanded the editorial staff and recruited former journalists, including Carolina Malay who worked for Manila Times before she went underground after the declaration of Martial Law. Malay was part of *Ang Bayan* staff from 1976 to 1984.

It was indeed about this time (after 1976) that the newly-constituted AB collective decided to orient the publication towards more news and features, specifically targeted to meet the information needs of revolutionary cadres at the district level. This would enable them to analyze events and developments for themselves. The reorientation was approved by the party leadership. (Malay, personal communication, May 19, 2015)

In the late 1970s, the CPP released a document titled, "Some Proposals for the Political Line of our Mass Newspapers." The 20-page document detailed the proper application in newspaper work of the Maoist mass line, "from the masses, to the masses." The document was released after members noted shortcomings in the style and policies and production of

certain revolutionary publications, including *Ang Bayan* (“Some Proposals for the Political Line of Our Mass Newspapers title of document,” n.d.).

We are raising the problem of the mass line as the key question in improving our work. On the basis of our serious study and application of the mass line, we should gauge our achievements and shortcomings in the field of newspapers and proceed to implement the lessons derived from such study. the document said. (p. 11)

The document criticized the theoretical and lengthy discussions on imperialism, feudalism, fascism, state and revolution: “The approach is frequently general, proceeding from a high level of abstraction” (“Some Proposals for the Political Line,” n.d., p. 4) the document stated. To address this issue, the document suggested that newspapers must provide specific examples of the theoretical concepts based on the rich experiences of the masses: “Abstraction must give way to concreteness” (p. 4).

The document also proposed that revolutionary publications must expose the plight of the masses instead of calling to action: “Exposure is the correct way of impelling collective action. We arouse and mobilize the people by increasing their awareness of their exploited and abused plight and by deepening their understanding of their problems and their weapons for combating these problems” (“Some Proposals for the Political Line,” n.d. p. 6). Instead of newspapers calling for “the masses must rise up and fight” (p. 6), publications must expose how the masses are exploited and abused.

The document also suggested that members conduct their own investigation before writing instead of depending on bourgeois press:

Some comrades manufacture articles without bothering to rise from their seats to investigate. They depend on the very few facts that they initially hear or obtain and assume that their “correct political line” will make up for whatever shortcomings or inaccuracies that their article or news report may contain (“Some Proposals for the Political Line,” n.d., p. 7)

Revolutionary writers must neither write about Medicare if they have not even read the Medicare Act nor write about the land reform policy if they have not read the Agricultural Land Reform Code: “No revolutionary writer should substitute his imagination for truth and genuine facts obtained after careful investigation” (p. 7).

The CPP document on proposed mass line in newspaper work is believed to have been approved by the Central Committee. The result was evident in the articles published by *Ang Bayan* in subsequent years. Revolutionary writers replaced the abstract and theoretical style in favor of a straightforward and concise style of reporting.

Ang Bayan underwent changes under Zumel. It was published biweekly following the recommendation made at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee. The birth in 1977 of *Rebolusyon*, the theoretical and political journal of the Central Committee, rid the news organ of lengthy and theoretical articles, which were incomprehensible to many members. This allowed Zumel and *Ang Bayan* staff to publish more news and in-depth reports. In 1977, the Central Committee deputized all the staff of the regional and sectoral mass papers as *Ang Bayan* correspondents. This improved news-gathering from the regions.

As a trained journalist, Zumel made sure that the basic journalistic style and rules in newswriting were followed. This was evident in news and feature articles published in 1977 onwards. Unlike previous issues, news articles in the local section focused on diverse topics including rice shortage and country's foreign debt.

“Philippines Faces Another Severe Rice, Corn Shortage “

The Filipino people are confronted by another severe shortage in rice and corn this year, contrary to claims of the Marcos fascist dictatorship that the country has attained self-sufficiency in these staples. A critical analysis of the reactionary government's own data indicates that the rice shortage this year may be as much as 800,000 metric tons. This is being covered up by importations.

As for corn, the fascist regime has quietly abandoned its claims of sufficiency and now admits that it is importing 120,000 metric tons worth P100 million from the United States and Thailand. (“Philippines Faces Another Severe,” 1977, p. 4)

“Foreign Debt Rises to \$6 Billion

The Philippines' foreign debt rose to \$6.04 billion in the first six months of this year (1977), up from \$5.5 billion at the end of 1976, according to the Central Bank in its mid-1977 report.

Every one of the 43 million Filipinos is now indebted to the international usurers (IMF, World Bank, ADB and foreign monopoly banks) by at least \$140 or P1,039 at the prevailing exchange rate. (“Foreign Debt Rises,” 1977, p. 11).

Both news articles used the inverted pyramid style of writing. Short and concise sentences were also used. The lead of the news article on rice and corn shortage was only composed of 32 words while the news article on foreign debt only had 35 words, word counts within the ideal limit. There are also fewer politically loaded and potentially libelous phrases. Terms like “fascist dictatorship” were used to describe the Marcos government while international creditors were referred as “usurers” but these were used to better describe the reality. The news articles are generally straightforward and less provocative.

It was during Zumel’s term as editor-in-chief that readers of *Ang Bayan* started to read “soft news” and human interest stories. These articles are welcome breaks from the hard news, military victories, and analyses that are staple of revolutionary publication. An example of an early human interest story describes the arrival of Chinese athletes in 1977. Similar news articles were conspicuously absent under Sison’s watch.

“Filipino People Warmly Receive Chinese Friends”

The Filipino masses warmly welcomed acrobats and football players from the People’s Republic of China who made a friendship tour of the Philippines recently. The Chungking Acrobatic Troupe gave performances in Manila, Bacolod City, Davao City and Lingayen, Pangasinan, from Aug. 8 to Sept. 6.

The large crowds that attended their shows admired the Chinese acrobats for their disciplined skill, grace, extraordinary coordination and spirit of helping one another. (“Filipino People Warmly Receive Chinese Friends,” 1977, p. 12).

To break the monotony of straightforward hard news, some articles employed a literary style. The delayed lead style was successfully used in an article on the entrapment of Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) leader. This literary style of writing was also used in an article to show the low wages of farmers at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

“Notorious CHDF Chief Falls in NPA Trap”

In the dark, the Red fighter felt the sack and smiled at his two comrades. The sack was half full of fat green mangoes. They took out four or five of the delicious fruits and scattered them on the path.

The Red fighters were not engaged in some mindless prank. They were laying a trap for a notorious enemy of the people—Ricardo Aromblo, chief of a 15-man CHDF detachment and barrio captain of Olivete (sic), Bongabon, Nueve Ecija (“Notorious CHDF Chief Falls,” 1978, p. 6)

“Model Rice Center Pays Worker Only P2.50 a day”

For a worker at the International Rice Research Institute (IRR), a whole day’s hard work in the field is equal only to one kilo of rice and two bananas or P2.50 a day.

One would not suspect this fact, if one were to look only at the grand buildings and vast farms of IRRI in Los Banos, Laguna (“Model Rice Center,” 1978, p. 8).

Another important section that appeared occasionally during the editorship of *Zumel* was the Letter to the editor. This was an indication that the publication wanted to receive feedback from the revolutionary masses. In an article published by *Ang Bayan* (Vol. XVI no. 9 November 1984), the publication urgently requested for questions, criticism, and feedback:

It is very important for AB (*Ang Bayan*) to get such feedback from section and district cadres and branch members in order to know more closely the very readers the staff is communicating with month after month, see whether the selection of topics and the way the articles are written really suit their needs and level of comprehension. This is decisive in implementing the paper’s orientation and in the ongoing efforts to improve our publication (“*Ang Bayan* Orientation,” 1984, p. 22).

With the number of the CPP-NPA members in the regions swelling, it was also important to send the revolutionary message and developments

in the people's war using the people's native tongue. From 1969 to 1981, *Ang Bayan* was written only in English. During the latter part of 1981, the Filipino version was published. This was pursuant to the CPP foundation document titled, "Program for a People's Democratic Revolution," (1968), which stated that the Party must propagate the national language as the principal medium of instruction and communication. The Iloco edition of *Ang Bayan* also began in 1981 for members in Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, and Batanes. The Waray and Cebuano editions for the Visayas and Mindanao sectors started coming out in 1982. "The local edition of AB are expected to contribute in no small measure to our efforts to strengthen the roots of the Party's mass newspaper among an ever broader readership nationwide" ("AB Iloco Edition," 1981, p. 33). The local editions of the news organ are almost similar in content and design except for a few local snippets inserted.

The Turbulent Years Of The 1980s

Ang Bayan of the 1980s reflected the challenges CPP faced in that decade. The assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., further strengthened the anti-Marcos dictatorship struggle. To legitimize his power, Marcos announced on November 3, 1985 that he was calling for a presidential elections on February 7, 1986. The opposition fielded Corazon Aquino, widow of the slain senator, as the standard bearer of the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), which was composed of bourgeois opposition. The CPP leadership, however, campaigned for the boycott of the presidential elections despite opposition from the legal Left. The CPP Executive Committee considered the elections a farce, claiming and Marcos would use all his power to win. The CPP Executive Committee published its stance in *Ang Bayan* ("Snap Election is a Farce," 1986):

"Snap Election is a Farce As Unfolding Events Prove"

As the February 7 snap election approaches, it becomes all the more clear to the Filipino people that this is a grand deception – a trap that aims to tighten their chains under the rule of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

It is now clear that Marcos is getting the upper hand in the campaign, that US imperialism is nursing along both the Marcos clique and its rival factions, that the bourgeois reformists have been inveigled into joining the farce. On the other hand, the boycott campaign has been sharply

advancing the exposition of, and opposition to, this, the US-Marcos regime's biggest political swindle, which is giving the people an important political lesson on the essence and importance of revolutionary struggle. (p. 1)

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the umbrella organization of revolutionary groups, supported the CPP Executive Committee's boycott stand. On April 24, 1973, the NDFP also came out with its own publication, *Liberation*. In its January 1986 issue NDFP also called for the boycott of the snap elections it described as a "political gimmick" produced by the Marcos dictatorship:

As soon as Marcos is "re-elected", they will again become no better than slaves under a despot who has already stripped them bare of their rights, their freedom and their patrimony. The snap elections is a farce that will only serve the interests of the Marcos regime and its US patron. ("Our Liberation Lies in People's War," 1986, p. 1)

As expected, Marcos could not afford to lose the election and employed widespread cheating. The anger and frustration over the result of the elections and years of dictatorship fueled the People Power Revolution in February 1986. Aquino assumed the presidency and consolidated her power by appointing her fellow conservative middle class as members of her cabinet.

Debates on the boycott stand continued to hound the CPP, thereby polarizing the leftist movement. It was considered a tactical error and a political blunder. The main areas of contention were the boycott's political correctness given the circumstances, and whether the proper process was followed by the CPP in arriving at its decision. The CPP leadership was quick to respond to criticism. It published its appeal in the May 1986 issue of *Ang Bayan* (as cited in Abinales, 1996):

The Party leadership is now encouraging leading Party organs... to sum up their experiences regarding the boycott policy.... Steps are being taken to encourage and develop the democratic spirit and democratic way of doing things in the Party. (p. 51)

The CPP Central Committee admitted to the boycott error of 1986 by releasing "Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors" (1991), which

was adopted by the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee in July 1992. The document was also published in *Rebolusyon*, CPP's theoretical journal. The Philippine Revolution Web Central (PRWC) website hosts the Second Rectification documents and *Ang Bayan*.

The document claimed that the issue has been “overstated and drummed up”:

The 1986 boycott was a major tactical error, as correctly described by the central leadership. During the short electoral campaign period, it separated and isolated the advanced section of the masses from the other sections which took the antifascist and anti-Marcos line. There was a failure to recognize that Marcos' cheating in the elections would incite the people to an unprecedented uprising as well as a grave split in the reactionary armed forces. The Party went into a vigorous effort and expense in order to impose its sectarian will on organizations and alliances... (“Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors,” 1993, p. 50).

After the February 7, 1986 snap elections, the CPP tried to recover by initiating calls for resistance against the Marcos dictatorship. Organizations belonging to the so-called “legal left”—the *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* (BAYAN) [New Patriotic Alliance], *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (KMU) [May First Movement], and League of Filipino Students (LFS)—joined forces with conservative groups to topple the Marcos regime. But the CPP remained critical of the new Aquino administration because of its elitist and conservative cabinet.

A cursory look at her cabinet and at other key positions in the new Administration shows that these are peopled by elements that are conservative, others who are liberal democratic, and still others like Enrile and Ramos who, while riding the current democratic tide, had been pillars of the Marcos fascist regime for many years. How these officials of varying and conflicting political persuasions interact—and how Mrs. Aquino herself relates to them—bears watching. (“Marcos is Toppled, Aquino is New President,” 1986, p. 3)

Purging and the internal struggle in the 1990s

The biggest blow to the CPP in its entire history was the purging operation conducted between the 1980s and early 1990s. In an article published by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), Garcia (2001) claimed that in Mindanao, between 600 to 900 people were killed in the revolutionary movement's "anti-infiltration" campaign called "*Kampanyang Aho*" [Garlic Campaign]. In 1988, some 121 activists were allegedly tortured and killed in an NPA guerilla camp in the Sierra Madre. Another purging operation, codenamed Olympia, is believed to have been launched in Metro Manila (Garcia, 2001).

CPP officials have denied direct involvement in purging operations. Based on the review of available issues from the 1980s to the 1990s, the purging operations were never explicitly mentioned in the Party's news organ. However: the Central Committee finally hinted at security problems in a statement released on the 19th anniversary and December 1987 issue of *Ang Bayan*:

Dapat nating sinupin ang pangangalaga sa seguridad ng Partido at pahasayin ang ating mga pamamaraan at proteksyon laban sa impiltrasyon ng mga ahente ng kaaway. Kaugnay nito, kailangan paunlarin at sistematisahin ang pagpili at pagsala sa mga nirerekрут, gayundin ang pangangalaga at pagsubaybay sa mga kadre at kasapi ("Pahayag ng Komite Sentral sa ika-19 taon ng muling pagkakatatag," 1987, p. 7).

The statement acknowledged for the first time the need to protect the party from infiltration by agents of the state. The Central Committee also appealed for the first time to improve recruitment and monitoring of Party members. In the Second Rectification Document, the Party eventually admitted that the devastation wrought by the purging operation was "unprecedented in the entire history of the Philippine revolution" ("Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors," 1993, p. 50). According to the document, the "anti-infiltration hysteria" began in 1985, resulting in the violation of human rights of close to a thousand people including activists in Mindanao. This decimated the party and reduced the membership from 9,000 to 3,000; 15 companies and 30 platoons were reduced to two companies and 17 platoons. The large, peasant base also was halved (p. 50).

The internal struggle continued in subsequent years. Those who supported the second rectification movement were called "Reaffirmists" while those who opposed it were called "Rejectionists." *Ang Bayan*

appears published stories about dwindling support from the Party and the punishment meted out on erring individuals.

Revolution Goes Online

While internal problems within the revolutionary movement simmered, the CPP took on a new struggle. In 1998, *Ang Bayan* was being published on a quarterly basis and was among the first CPP publications to be posted online on the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) website, maintained by its International Office (NDFP-IO) from Utrecht, The Netherlands. The NDFP used the website to publish its statements and other materials, which were further circulated through email. By late 1999, *Ang Bayan* launched its own website in order to exercise more flexibility:

The CPP Central Committee decided that AB should come out more often in order for it to become a more currently responsive and effective political organ of the Party and reach a wider audience locally and internationally. The means for distributing the Party paper should also be made more efficient in order to make sure that it reaches its readership in the shortest possible time and in a more direct and less cumbersome manner. (CPP Information Bureau, personal communication, February 9, 2009)

In 2001, the CPP decided to expand its internet-based information work by launching the Philippine Revolution Web Central (PRWC). Aside from merely publishing *Ang Bayan* online, the website is the central repository of statements, publications, journals, videos, photos, and other materials issued by the CPP, the NDFP, the NPA, and other revolutionary organizations. The late Gregorio Rosal, also known as Ka Roger, became the face and voice of the revolutionary movement at the height of the peace talks after the EDSA Revolution in February 1986. He is believed to have been one of the driving forces behind the online revolution. Ka Roger was appointed to the National Propaganda Commission in 2001 and served as its deputy secretary. Aside from serving as the CPP's spokesperson, he also supervised the publication of *Ang Bayan* and the PRWC. He also headed *Sine Proletaryo* [Proletarian Film], the video outfit of the CPP.

The NDFP-Information Office and other comrades abroad likewise use the internet as a platform to support the revolution. The NDFP was ahead in publishing *Liberation* online in 1997. The technological revolution meant the Party needed to recruit students and professionals from sectors with

training and skills in information technology. The CPP also managed to set up revolutionary committees in the science and technology sector:

They are tapped to contribute their know how to the information technology work of the Party and the movement. At the same time, if such were immediately unavailable for particular tasks, Party members and revolutionaries who had the aptitude to learn such work were specially trained and developed for the work (CPP Information Bureau, personal communication, February 9, 2009).

Aside from waging an online revolution, the CPP also decided to use multimedia platforms in its education and propaganda. Videos, photos and other audio-visual aids were integrated into discussions for quicker comprehension by potential recruits with limited formal education or limited time to read complex documents and directives. Most of the videos and visual aids are also available on the PWRC website.

Internet access helped revolutionary writers collect data, photos and videos from various parts of the country. Before the internet, collecting articles and photos from the countryside was a big challenge, especially during intensive counter-insurgency operations. With the internet, informants based in the countryside can directly transmit their materials in seconds. *Ang Bayan* staff can easily produce the publication. Translating the publication has also been easier.

According to the CPP Public Information Bureau, the effort to come out with *Ang Bayan* regularly is an indication of the CPP's determination to develop propaganda and disseminate information about and for the revolutionary movement:

It is also a testament to the dedicated effort and methodical work of the comrades assigned to the task of the Party's online publishing to organize and to effectively and securely carry out their work amidst the relentless offensives and surveillance by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the intelligence and security agencies of the reactionary state.

Since majority of its members are in the countryside with limited access to the internet, traditional methods of printing *Ang Bayan* continues especially in guerilla fronts. *Ang Bayan* editors claimed that about 20,000 copies is printed every two weeks. Unfortunately, the print run is not enough to meet demand. Editors feel that the print run should be increased tenfold. Through personal communication, Sison claimed that the CPP boasts of about 200,000 members (Sison, personal communication, April 7, 2015).

The PRWC attracts around 5,000 hits daily, roughly around 150,000 hits per month. The Editors do not have figures on the exact number of actual downloads for *Ang Bayan* and how many copies are reproduced from these downloads. A number of regional territories do not have to pick up the latest copy of *Ang Bayan*. They just need to download the .pdf file and reproduce them by using photocopying machines or the manual V-type equipment.

The PRWC is also a blessing for journalists covering the revolutionary movement. Before internet service, journalists had to climb Mt. Banahaw or travel for hours into guerilla zone to get an exclusive interview with the CPP or NPA leaders. Journalists also risked their lives covering the revolutionary movement especially during military operations. With the CPP website, journalists can easily access the statements, photos, and videos of the revolutionary movement. They remain updated on developments in the revolutionary movement without leaving the newsroom. This in turn has resulted in wider coverage and greater interest in the revolutionary movement.

The CPP is aware of the security risks that they have to face with the internet. As a precautionary measure, the PRWC is hosted on a server abroad to make it physically inaccessible to the Philippine military. However, the possibility of sabotage by counter-revolutionary forces remains. In 2006, PRWC's previous domain was redirected to a travel website that showed blue skies ("CPP-NPA Website is Back," 2006). The CPP Public Information Bureau, however, clarified that its website was not hacked, rather when the old domain name expired, they decided to register a new name.

Website administration also constantly change their passwords and update the security. They also pinpoint and track those who access the site.

According to the CPP Public Information bureau, the internet opened up "a new field of struggle" that extends the information or propaganda war of the revolutionary movement. According to a report by the United Nations, around 37% of the Philippine population have access to the internet, although it ranks 106 out of the 191 countries evaluated in the report ("UN Report only 37% of Filipinos have Internet Access," 2014).

Indeed, the revolutionary forces should plan and organize efforts to take advantage of this new medium as its use grows among the people. However, the internet has not yet reached the vast majority of the Filipino masses. The revolutionary forces must take full advantage of the internet, while making use of other reliable means of reaching out to and mobilizing

the Filipino people, and combine these whenever possible (CPP Public Information Bureau, personal communication, February 9, 2009).

Functions of the Revolutionary Newspaper

Newspapers chronicle history by documenting important events. For more than four decades, *Ang Bayan* chronicled not only victories and major developments in the national democratic struggle, but also its errors and challenges. Based on the review of the documents and the issues available, *Ang Bayan* also provided the following functions:

- 1) Serve as Instrument of Propaganda and Agitation
- 2) Interpret and Analyze Events based on CPP's standpoint
- 3) Promote CPP Ideology and Party Unity ;
- 4) Provide Alternative News and Perspectives ; and
- 5) Inspire the proliferation of other underground papers

Instrument of Propaganda and Agitation

Ang Bayan played its role as an instrument of propaganda by highlighting the victories of the revolutionary forces and how it advancement the national democratic struggle. During Sison's term as editor-in-chief from 1969-1976 recorded the number of military, police, and paramilitary troops captured or killed in military operations. For example, news articles published in the August 1, 1969 issue were: "New People's Army Scores Victories" (1969) and "New People's Army Punishes US Imperialists" (1969). These articles highlighted the number of firearms and ammunitions seized during the operations, and the number of US troops eliminated. Reports of military victories depicted CPP/NPA's victories in war and helped inspire support from readers and non-revolutionaries.

The language, revolutionary jargon, and additional information spice up news articles in the underground publication agitated readers. In "New People's Army Scores Victories," the second paragraph described the four Philippine Constabulary sergeants killed as "paymasters for informers at the barrio level and as extortion masterminds preying on the people in various occupations." The third paragraph of the same news article described military troops as "reactionary puppet troopers" and "reactionary military authorities." In the same paragraph, community-based commercial newspapers were described as "bourgeois press" ("New People's Army Scores Victories," 1969, p. 6)

Meanwhile, the headline "New People's Army Punishes U.S. Imperialists"

used the word “imperialist” to describe US troops. The same paragraph continued with, “without being punished for their crimes inside the U.S. military bases and for their wanton bombing raids on the Vietnamese people” (“New People’s Army Punishes U.S. Imperialists,” 1969, p. 7), which may have rallied readers against the US military airmen.

The popularity of the revolutionary movement cannot be attributed solely to the distribution of *Ang Bayan*. Like other social movements in the world, the socio-economic conditions sow the seeds of revolutions. But the role of the press in popularizing a revolutionary movement should not be ignored. *Ang Bayan* gained readers and increased its circulation as the CPP grew. From about a dozen members during its reestablishment in 1968, the number of CPP members and candidate members surged to 2,000 in 1972. About 55% were in the countryside and 45% were in the Manila-Rizal region. About 53% of the members were of peasant origin, about 4% were blue-collar workers, and about 43% were petty-bourgeois (Communist Party of the Philippines, 1972). By 1988, Armando Liwanag (Armed with Light), one of Sison’s *nom de guerre*, revealed that ranks had swelled to 35,000 (Liwanag, 1988) and has reached around 200,000 (Sison, personal communication, April 7, 2015) after the new organ has gone digital.

Interpret and Analyze Events based on the CPP’s standpoint

Though journalists are taught to be objective and avoid editorializing, *Ang Bayan* writers set this aside to perform another important function: To interpret and analyze events and social problems for revolutionaries and the masses. “We expose to the masses the root causes of their problems, and we show them who their real enemies are. Based on social investigation, we identify the principal representatives of the basic problems of every class, sector, place and period” (Communist Party of the Philippines, n.d. p. 7), according to the undated CPP document titled, “Mass Work.”

As the main newspaper of the CPP, *Ang Bayan* must interpret and analyze events and social problems based on the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist standpoint. This task of the publication is clear on its masthead “*Pahayagang Partido Komunistang Pilipinas Pinapatnubayan ng Kaisipang Mao Tsetung*” [Publication of the Communist Party of the Philippines guided by Mao Zedong Thought]. Marxism and Leninism are used as foundational doctrines of the revolutionary movement, while Maoism is used as the strategy in the armed struggle. Maoism is a communist doctrine that emphasizes protracted revolution in the countryside and stresses the role of the peasantry in the armed struggle. Revolutionaries have a deeper

understanding of the Maoist thought by daily application. In the 1960s, stories denouncing leaders of the disbanded PKP Luis Taruc and Jesus Lava was common. *Ang Bayan* provided deeper analyses of the controversy:

- Like the Congress of Re-establishment, the First Plenum under the supremes
- Guidance of Mao Tsetung thought continues to repudiate Lavaism and
- Taruc-ism, the two major local sources of modern revisionism, and celebrates
- The Party's latest triumph, that is, over the Taruc-Sumulong clique which
- Is a rectification of Lavaism. The New People's Army, cleansed of Lavaism and
- Taruc-ism, is now securely under the absolute leadership of the Communist
- Party of the Philippines and is steadfastly fully in the service of the people ("Intensify Party Rebuilding and the Armed Struggle," 1969, p. 1).

Promote CPP Ideology and Party Unity

Like any other political organization or party, the CPP also experienced internal struggles and debates. Liwanag (1993) mentioned that in the 1975 Plenum of the Central Committee demanded that the phrase "*Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninism-Maoismo*" [Guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism] must be removed from its masthead. The slogan was not removed because most of the Central Committee members remained convinced that it was the correct political line for the movement. Deep understanding of the CPP's political line appears to have strengthened the revolutionary movement for the past 46 years. Unlike other revolutionary publications, *Ang Bayan* "explicitly underscores and explains the Marxist-Leninist ideological guidance on the line and practice of the national-democratic revolution" ("Ang Bayan Orientation, History and Situation," 1984, p. 17).

The *Ang Bayan* section called Documents provided a platform for important documents and directives from the CPP Central Committee:

It is also the role of propaganda to popularize the calls of the Party in order for the masses to understand them, unify around them and carry them out in their own actions. We expound on the basis of the calls, and we also teach the

means for carrying them out. (Communist Party of the Philippines, n.d., p. 12)

In the CPP document, “Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as Guide to the Philippine Revolution,” Liwanag (1993) cited adherence to the correct political line as a contributing factor important for the growth of the organization:

The rapid advance of the revolutionary armed struggle and the legal democratic movement and rapid increase of armed strength was the result of a number of factors: (1) the strong foundation of the revolutionary movement developed in the 1970s; (2) the perseverance of the revolutionary forces along the correct line in most regions, in accordance particularly with the founding documents of the Party, Specific Characteristics of People’s War in the Philippines, Our Urgent Tasks and the Basic Party Course; and (3) the rapid worsening of the crisis of the ruling system, which exacerbated not only the contradictions among the reactionaries but even within sections of the ruling clique (Liwanag, 1993, p. 20).

Since most early issues of *Ang Bayan* are no longer available, previously published Party documents and directives can now be easily downloaded from the CPP’s official website, the PRWC. Among the CPP foundation documents are the following: *Saligang Batas ng Partido Komunistang Pilipinas* [Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines]; Program for a People’s Democratic Revolution, which provides an analysis of the Philippine condition and the plan for the CPP; Rectify Errors, Rebuild the Party!, which provides a comprehensive history of the old CPP; *Saligang Alituntunin ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan* [Constitution of the New People’s Army]; and the Philippine Society and Revolution, which identified feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucrat-capitalism as the social ills in Philippine society. The three “isms” became popular slogans during the First Quarter Storm of the 1970s, and ideas are still quoted in many rallies organized by the national democratic movement.

Provide Alternative News and Perspectives

During Martial Law, the crony press was instrumental in promoting the Marcos ideology and in covering up the true state of the nation. Those allowed to operate were the *Philippine Daily Express* owned by Roberto

Benedicto, a sugar baron and a Marcos crony; *Times Journal* owned by Gov. Benjamin Romualdez, younger brother of former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos; and *Bulletin Today* owned by another crony Hans Menzi (Ofreneo, 1986).

The Department of Public Information issued two orders that prohibited the publication of seditious materials that promoted disorder, lawlessness, and violence. No foreign correspondence critical of the Philippine government was also allowed to be filed in the country (Ofreneo, 1986). Because of these, it was difficult to publish or broadcast news articles that criticized the Marcos dictatorship.

People who refused to believe the Marcos ideology and those who were suspicious of the “true, the good and the beautiful” projects of then First Lady Imelda Marcos, reverted to underground publications, including *Ang Bayan*. Copies of *Ang Bayan* and other underground publications were even mailed to anti-Marcos activists and CPP sympathizers in the United States and in Australia. During the early years of martial law, *Ang Bayan* was an alternative newspaper that published stories censored by Marcos-controlled media. For example, the article “Ranking AFP Officers in Torture Cases Listed” identified officers directly involved in the arrest and torture of political activists (“Ranking AFP Officers in Torture Cases Listed,” 1977, p. 8).

During her eight-year involvement in *Ang Bayan*, Carolina Malay said underground publications strengthened the underground movement during martial law by providing a information and political analysis:

The traditional media, repressed and limited, could not be relied upon to provide legitimate, verifiable information. The underground publications, though with an even more limited audience, gave tangible affirmation that the movement was making progress, scoring victories. (Malay, personal communication, May 19, 2015)

Malay added that maintaining *Ang Bayan*’s newsgathering, production, and distribution networks contributed to the extensive functioning of the revolutionary movement.

Inspire the proliferation of other underground papers

Ang Bayan’s success inspired regional factions of the CPP and other organizations affiliated with the national democratic movement to publish underground newspapers despite the risks. In October 1972, after the declaration of martial law, Malay and her husband, veteran journalist

Satur Ocampo, set up *Balitang Malayang Pilipinas* [Independent News Philippines], a news service that supplies news to other underground publications. Although a number of underground papers were published during the martial law years, *Ang Bayan* and *Liberation* were the most widely read and the most regularly published.

The following underground publications were also circulated during the Marcos years and beyond:

- *Ang Guerilya* [*The Guerilla*]: Revolutionary paper of Eastern Visayas;
- *Ang Partisano* [*The Partisan*]: Official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Philippines and published in Filipino;
- *Baringkuas* [*Uprising*]: Revolutionary newspaper of the people of Cagayan Valley;
- *Kalayaan* [*Freedom*]: Official publication of Kabataan Makabayan;
- *Daba-daba* [*Flame*]: Revolutionary mass paper in Panay;
- *Dangadang* [*Struggle*]: Revolutionary newspaper of the people of North-west Luzon;
- *Himagsik* [*Revolt*]: Revolutionary newspaper of the people of Central Luzon started publication in 1977;
- *Larab* [*Flame*]: Revolutionary newspaper in Eastern Visayas;
- *Paghimakas* [*Struggle*]: Newspaper of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Negros;
- *Silyab* [*Spark*]: Published by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army in Bicol;
- *Talibang Bayan* [*The People's News*]: Monthly magazine of the National Democratic Front/CPP- Metro Manila-Rizal region.

Revolutionary programs broadcast during Martial Law augmented dissemination to supporters of the underground movement.

Conclusion

For almost five decades, *Ang Bayan* served as the chronicler of the communist movement by detailing every milestone and advancement of the people's struggle for national liberation. It survived various challenges, such as the repression of press freedom during the dark years of martial law, and the internal struggle between the rejectionists and reaffirmists. The

underground publication is not immune to technological developments. From a mimeographed publication in the 1960s, *Ang Bayan* managed to wage the people's revolution online in 1998 with help from the NDFP.

Former *Ang Bayan* staffer, Malay, said that the underground publication “gave tangible affirmation that the movement was making progress, scoring victories” (personal communication, May 15, 2015). The news articles and editorials in the publication are based on the experiences of revolutionaries and their allies, reflecting events inside the movement. Malay also said: “Maintenance of the news-gathering, production and distribution networks contributed to the extensive functioning of the underground machinery” (personal communication, May 15, 2015). *Ang Bayan's* success did not depend only on the Central Committee and the AB Collective. Revolutionary correspondents who wrote stories; members who took turns reproducing the publication; and the website administrators who uploaded files and videos have all done their share in making *Ang Bayan* what it is now.

The revolutionary press may have changed its form but not its content. Online or in print, *Ang Bayan* continues to criticize US imperialism, bureaucrat capitalism, and state fascism in all its forms. Online or in print, the people's press continues to draw strength, not from its circulation or number of shares and tweets, but from the people's war and the people's dream for national liberation.

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