

WSWS responds to Joma Sison and the Philippine Maoists

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On June 5 the *World Socialist Web Site* published an article exposing how the Philippine Maoists were engaged in war-mongering against China and were “playing a vital role in the service of US imperialism.”

The context is Washington’s sharp escalation of pressure on Beijing over the South China Sea, including the threat to fly military aircraft within the 12-mile territorial limit around Chinese-controlled atolls. Philippine President Benigno Aquino has supported the US to the hilt, last week comparing China to Nazi Germany.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its legal front organizations, including Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), were stung by the WSWS analysis because it exposed their machinations on behalf of Washington to the Philippine working class.

On June 7, Renato Reyes, the secretary general of BAYAN, posted a link to the article on Facebook, announcing simply, “This article is stupid and ignorant.”

Within hours, Joma Sison, the head of the CPP, responded to Reyes on Facebook. “You need to immediately spread the position of PINAS opposing the violations of Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity by both the US and China.”

He continued, “The World Socialist web [sic] is Trotskyite. It is always anti-CPP and anti-communist. Prove to everyone that you are not one-sided for any interfering foreign power, but rather are for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines in accordance with the UN Charter and UNCLOS [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea].”

On June 12, Renato Reyes wrote a brief response, repeating the defense that BAYAN was opposed to both the US and China in defense of national sovereignty. He then asks the *World Socialist Web Site*, “when are you going to oppose China’s violations of our sovereignty? Or do you think it is a non-issue?”

The responses of Sison and Reyes graphically expose the class orientation of the CPP. Neither makes any effort to deny that they are promoting a war against China in the name of national sovereignty and the UNCLOS. This is the preoccupation of the Philippine bourgeoisie.

The CPP is a bourgeois political party, staffed with petty-bourgeois operatives who work in the service of bourgeois interests. There is not the slightest trace of a socialist perspective in their politics. They have no concern for, and they make no reference to, the working class.

Socialists are not indifferent to the question of national sovereignty in relation to oppressed countries such as the Philippines, but it is entirely subordinate to the development of the international unity and independent organization of the working class.

The task of Philippine workers is the defense of the working class in every country against the war-drive of US imperialism and the predations of international finance capital. This is only possible through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, including the criminal Stalinist regime in Beijing.

The hostility of Sison and Reyes to Trotskyism and the WSWS underscores the fundamentally opposed class perspective of Maoism, which is based on nationalism and has always been oriented to the national bourgeoisie.

The CPP’s frothing support for national sovereignty is aimed at subordinating the working class and oppressed masses to the most right-wing sections of the Philippine bourgeoisie, who seek to advance their venal interests by embracing the former colonial ruler, calling for the return of US military bases and promoting the US war drive against China.

The CPP has all but abandoned its previous empty demagoguery against US imperialism. BAYAN has stated that it is opposed to the US basing deal because there is no guarantee that the US will go to war on behalf of the

Philippines in the South China Sea. In other words, if Washington provided such an assurance, they would welcome new American bases with open arms.

Moreover, the CPP and its front organizations have taken it upon themselves to provoke war. Sison has called for the modernization and expansion of the Philippine Armed Forces. At the same time, he has written, because the Philippines “cannot as yet wage naval, air and missile warfare,” other means of fighting China are needed.

Sison called for the “broad masses of the Filipino people” to “disable and dismantle the enterprises of any hostile imperialist power.” He added in an interview that “they only need to have a patriotic will, a lighter or match box and cans of petrol to disable or even destroy any unwanted enterprise.”

The CPP is threatening to target terrorist violence at the ethnic Chinese Filipino community, as an examination of the speeches of CPP front organization leaders makes clear.

In protests outside the Chinese embassy on June 4, Elmer Labog, the chair of the CPP labor union umbrella Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) delivered a speech in which he race-baited Filipino businessmen of Chinese ancestry, drawing attention to their surnames. “It’s no surprise that the largest Filipino-Chinese millionaire, last name Henry Sy, is colluding with those Chinese to exploit our labor power.”

Labog was followed by Tonying Flores, secretary general of the CPP’s peasant wing, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP). His anti-Chinese racism was particularly vile. “Why are these Chinese here in the Philippines?” he asked. “From toothpick factories, corner bakeries (*panaderia*), and barbershops to the malls, we now see it’s almost all owned by Chinese.”

He denounced a string of Chinese surnames, and accused them of owning all of the country’s transportation and controlling all of the land, which should belong to the Filipino peasants. He concluded, “We need to kick the Chinese out of our country.”

The majority of Filipinos of Chinese ancestry are workers. Most were born and have lived their entire lives in the country. Throughout history, they have been marginalized and at times subjected to pogroms whipped up by the ruling class. The CPP has now taken on the role of fomenting violent chauvinism against this vulnerable population.

On June 12, Sison reiterated this call, threatening that “the patriotic and progressive forces of the Filipino” would undertake “a wide range of revolutionary punitive

actions.”

The CPP is openly aligning itself with “patriotic” sections of the bourgeoisie—i.e., to the most reactionary, militarist layers.

On June 8, Bayan and several other CPP front organizations joined with a group of former Senators to establish a new political coalition, Pilipinong Nagkakaisa para sa Soberanya (PINAS) [Filipinos United for Sovereignty]. On June 12, they staged rallies outside both the Chinese and US embassies.

Who are these people? They are headed by:

Rene Saguisag, the former Senator and defense attorney of former President Joseph Estrada. He called last year for the United States to place a military base in the disputed Spratly islands.

Ernesto Maceda, former executive secretary under Ferdinand Marcos and ambassador to the United States under President Joseph Estrada.

Leticia Ramos Shahani, sister of former President Fidel Ramos and a former senator. She voted in 1991 to extend the lease of US bases in the country.

These new allies of the CPP are the longstanding friends of US imperialism. PINAS issued a statement announcing that they “vehemently oppose” China and are “wary” of the United States. This lopsided press statement reflects the politics of the organization and of the CPP itself.

The CPP is bent on mobilizing its social base behind the US drive to war against China in the name of national sovereignty, while attempting to maintain the appearance of independence from Washington.

For workers and the urban and rural poor of the Philippines, what is at stake is not a question of national sovereignty, but rather one of class. The only way in which the working class can stop the drive to war and the relentless attacks on its living standards is to establish its political independence from all factions of the bourgeoisie and mobilise the peasantry in the fight for political power. A workers’ and peasants’ government must be established to implement socialist policies as part of the struggle for socialism internationally.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) alone fights for this perspective and for the interests of the working class.



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