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Inside the Philippine Revolution: The New People's Army and Its Struggle for Power. By William Chapman. (1987) Reprint, Bloomsbury, 2021. 288 pp.

Two detailed journalistic accounts of the history of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) were published in the second half of the 1980s, shortly after the 1986 People Power ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos: William Chapman's *Inside the Philippine Revolution* (1987) and Gregg Jones' *Red Revolution* (1989). Each was, in its own way, a significant contribution.

Chapman and Jones based their books on extensive interviews conducted in 1985–86 (Chapman) and 1985–88 (Jones) with CPP members and former members, as well as the wide periphery around the party and its allied organizations. Both works were well written and marked by a humane sympathy for the participants in the armed mass movement of the CPP's New People's Army (NPA).

In 2021, Bloomsbury Publishing reprinted Chapman's book. No new material was added, no foreword was written, nor was any alteration made. Thirty-six years after its publication, the time to assess the book's particular historiographical contributions has passed; they have long been incorporated into the larger field. A review of the reprinted book is thus largely a question of the direction that was taken by subsequent scholarship.

The historiography of the CPP has been dominated by interview-based research and the scholarly methodology associated with such accounts. Chapman's work broke new ground and, to an extent, his interviews established a pattern that was followed by subsequent journalism and scholarship on the history of the party.

Such an approach has its strengths and its weaknesses, but after three decades of this research it is the weaknesses that are most pronounced. The interview-based works contain, often in vivid terms, the internal disputes raging when the interviews were conducted. In uncovering the political logic of the past, however, they prove unreliable at best.

Political tendencies, prominent at the beginning of the 1970s, died or disappeared over the course of the Marcos dictatorship. A number of major historical actors are cast as bit characters in later accounts because their representatives no longer occupied the stage in later decades and thus were never interviewed. Histories constructed in this way are constrained to the unintended teleology of subsequent prominence.

This weakness, prominent in all interview-based histories of the CPP, is exacerbated by the absence of a careful prior examination of the written record produced at the time of the events in question. As a result, the interview-based accounts show a lack of awareness of when the political positions of those interviewed were fundamentally altered or were falsifications of the past.

Chapman's account, for example, of the events on the eve of the imposition of martial law in 1972—the split within the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) in 1967 and the founding of the CPP in 1968/9 under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison—bears the imprint of these shortcomings. He writes, “the expulsion of Sison was perhaps the PKP's last significant act. With him went its ties to both the avid young Marxists and the nationalist movement it had sought to control. The PKP became an inconsequential collection of men so timid and fearful that its most publicized act of the next decade was the endorsement of Ferdinand Marcos' proclamation of martial law” (p. 77).

I demonstrate in *The Drama of Dictatorship* that, far from being a spent force in the early 1970s, the PKP remained a powerful party, with a larger base among the youth—particularly peasant youth—than the CPP (Scalice 2023). The “timid men” of the PKP waged an armed struggle and a bombing campaign in Metro Manila in coordination with Marcos's military to justify the imposition of martial law and then entered an alliance with the dictator. They murdered the members of their own party opposed to this policy. The PKP's support for Marcos ultimately cost the party its mass base, and thus by the time Chapman was conducting his interviews the party, for all practical purposes, no longer existed. The orthodox—and

false—narrative of the CPP, drafted by Sison himself, dominated the interviews conducted by Chapman and subsequent researchers, and the PKP was thus largely written out of history.

The thread of the past that disappeared almost entirely, the truth most inconvenient to those interviewed, was the opportunist relations that the PKP and CPP established with sections of the Philippine elite. These ties were of a pragmatic and conjunctural character, immediately useful and subsequently embarrassing. No interview-based history thus reports Sison's support for President Macapagal in 1963, or his instructions to the *Kabataang Makabayan* (Nationalist Youth), which would become the radical youth wing of the CPP, to vote for Marcos in 1965.

Things change significantly when we examine the history of the mid-1980s reported in Chapman's work. Here the contemporary interviews he conducted reveal a diversity of opinion, a seething unrest within the party, no longer bound up in the constructed myths of an earlier decade.

A work of history is itself a historical document. Chapman conducted his interviews at an extraordinary moment. Between 1985 and 1986, the Philippines stood on the brink of a social cataclysm and passed through a political revolution, but these—the two defining features of the period—were only ever partially connected. Read with an eye to how the vicissitudes of the time shaped the tenor of the interviews he conducted, Chapman's work provides new insight into this fraught historical juncture.

Chapman's extensive material on the vicious warfare in Davao City in 1984–86 is invaluable. Any historical account of the rise of Rodrigo Duterte as mayor of Davao, the head of death squads yet closely allied to the CPP, will find in Chapman's account essential background material.

Most fascinating of all are the shifting and competing attitudes in the CPP towards how best to muster the country's mounting social anger in 1985 to the party's advantage. Debates over insurrection and the urban work of the party were refracted through the decisive question of whether to participate in or boycott the 1986 snap election.

The CPP leadership chose to boycott the election, a decision that Chapman terms “the party’s worst misjudgment” (p. 233).

What is most striking in historical retrospect is that both sides of the boycott debate, in Chapman’s work, sought the same end: not the political interests of the working masses, but the support of the middle class. The advocates of participation saw the election as a means of winning support from Corazon Aquino’s middle-class constituency. The proponents of boycott declared that Marcos’s inevitable victory by fraud would disillusion Aquino’s middle-class supporters and convince them of the correctness of the CPP’s actions. History outflanked the CPP. Marcos was ousted, and as the party grasped for the loyalty of the middle class, they lost a good deal of their hold over their mass base.

Proximity to these events invests the interviews Chapman conducted with persistent historical significance, but it also imbues them with a certain short-sighted and partial character. They retain the imprint of being a first draft of history. Most notable in this regard are the troubling rumours in Chapman’s account of mass graves and of purges and the execution of party cadre by the CPP. These reports were as yet largely unsubstantiated in 1986 and Chapman presents as plausible the claim by a Mindanao party leader that the murder of nearly two hundred party members had been conducted not by the party’s leadership but rather by a military agent who had infiltrated the party (p. 182). While a definitive scholarly account of the purges in the CPP has yet to be written, we now conclusively know that over the course of the 1980s the party launched multiple internal witch-hunts, marked by the presumption of guilt, torture, show trials and mass graves. Over a thousand cadre in different regions of the Philippines were killed by their own leaders.

Finally, whatever its shortcomings, Chapman’s work is capably written, at times even elegant. He has an eye for the apt use of a choice quotation and explains broad historical developments in a nuanced yet approachable fashion. His explanation, for example, of the impact of Claro M. Recto on the burgeoning nationalist conceptions of the 1950s and 1960s is marvellous.

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Slum Imaginaries and Spatial Justice in Philippine Cinema. By Katrina Macapagal. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021. 204 pp.

The book explores contemporary urban cinema or city films in the Philippines, but shifts gears from the usual metropolitan centres and its culture of the one per cent to the sprawling urban poor communities primarily hidden from the arteries and heartlands of the metropolis but where a third of Metro Manila residents locate, reterritorialize and home themselves. It is a massive social engineering of invisibility by the state but which is rendered visible, vibrant and prone to violence and individual redemptive action in Philippine cinema.

Katrina Macapagal undertakes a difficult project of ethically mapping the time-space visibility of social injustices in the “slum chronotope” in city films—or “how narratives and characters of selected Philippine films might reveal imaginaries of ‘spatial justice’” (p. 4)—emanating primarily from Philippine independent cinema, a surge of independent film-making by mostly young people that began in 2005 and that was brought about by the democratization of film-making through digital technology. It is the first book that undertakes a study of the films produced in what is widely referred to as the third golden age of Philippine cinema, as it is also the first book on Philippine urban cinema.

The representation of disenfranchised peoples and spaces and of social justice in film is a tricky political project, invoking a filmic