



Revista Asia América Latina

Año 2. Volumen 1. Número 4.
DICIEMBRE 2017. Argentina
ISSN 2524-9347

Grupo de Estudios de Asia y América Latina
Instituto de Estudios sobre América Latina y el Caribe
Universidad de Buenos Aires

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ISSN 2524-9347

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Eudeba
Universidad de Buenos Aires

1° edición: diciembre 2016

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Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires
Sociedad de Economía Mixta
Av. Rivadavia 1571/73 (1033) Ciudad de Buenos Aires
Tel: 4383-8025 / Fax: 4383-2202
www.eudeba.com.ar

DG: *Alessandrini & Salzman* para Eudeba.

Impreso en Argentina
Hecho el depósito que establece la ley 11.723

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DOSSIER

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Asia
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A SHINING BEACON: GLOBAL MAOISM AND COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS IN PERU AND CAMBODIA BETWEEN 1965 AND 1992

Dr. Matthew Galway

Sessional Lecturer, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)
Post-doctoral Fellow, University of California, Berkeley

matt.galway@alumni.ubc.ca

RESUMEN: Karl Marx predijo que “la Revolución China arrojará una chispa sobre la sobrecargada mina del presente sistema industrial, y causará la explosión de la crisis general hace ya bastante preparada, la cual al expandirse al exterior será seguida de cerca por la revolución política en el continente”. Un siglo después, el líder chino Mao Zedong fue aún más lejos, empeñándose en transmitir la Revolución China mundialmente. Este trabajo examina cómo y por qué el maoísmo emergió como una ideología guía en dos casos de estudio separados: Perú y Camboya. Se argumenta que los intelectuales itinerantes (José Sotomayor y Manuel Soria de Perú, y Saloth Sar de Camboya) vieron a la China comunista como un modelo para sus propios diseños revolucionarios. Al visitarla, perfeccionaron sus ideologías y desarrollaron una *raison d'être* revolucionaria sofisticada, impregnada con la estampa ideológica de Mao Zedong. Sus visitas a China coincidieron con la ruptura sino-soviética (1960), después de la cual Pekín buscó posicionarse como un ejemplo ideológico para que otros la siguieran. En tanto los oficiales superiores de la China comunista hacían hincapié en la aptitud de la experiencia revolucionaria de China, la recepción de estos intelectuales del maoísmo fue dialectal en su naturaleza. Al responder, como argumenta este trabajo, estos hombres tuvieron una

considerable capacidad sobre su interpretación del maoísmo, y en última instancia, en la producción de una nueva ideología.

Palabras clave: Comunismo; maoísmo; Perú; Camboya; indigenismo.

ABSTRACT: Karl Marx predicted that “the Chinese Revolution will throw a spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolution on the continent.” A century later, Chinese leader Mao Zedong went further, endeavoring to transmit the Chinese revolution globally. This paper examines how and why Maoism emerged as a guiding ideology in two disparate case studies: Peru and Cambodia. It argues that traveling intellectuals (José Sotomayor and Manuel Soria from Peru, Saloth Sar from Cambodia) turned to Communist China as a model for their own revolutionary designs. Upon visiting, they honed their ideology and developed a sophisticated revolutionary *raison d'être* imbued with Mao's ideological stamp. Their visits to China coincided with the Sino-Soviet Split (1960) after which Beijing sought to set an ideological example for others to follow. As senior Chinese Communist officials stressed the worldwide suitability of China's revolutionary experience, these intellectuals' reception of Maoism was dialectical in nature. By speaking back, as this paper argues, these men had considerable agency over their interpretation of Maoism, and ultimately, in the production of a new ideology.

Keywords: Communism; Maoism; Peru; Cambodia; Indigenism.

I. Introduction.

對偉大顛毛澤東主席心懷一個 “忠” 字。對偉大顛毛澤東思想狠抓 “用” 字。 (In regard to the great teacher Chairman Mao, cherish the words “loyalty.” In regard to the great “Mao Zedong Thought,” stress vigorously the word “usefulness,” 1967. (Landsberger and Van der Heijden, 2009).

Cultural Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) once stated that

ideas—religious, moral, practical, aesthetic—must as Max Weber, among others, never tired of insisting, be carried by powerful social groups to have powerful social effects: someone must revere them, celebrate them, defend them, impose them. They have to be institutionalized in order to find not just an intellectual existence in society, but, so to speak, *a material one as well* (p.314).

Ideas, while tied inextricably to materiality, are never static or fixed; rather people have agency over interpretation, reception, adaptation, and inversion or perversion, and their surroundings help to inform an idea's appraisal as something useful to fill a void (Macintyre, 1989, pp. 117-8). Yet one relevant question emerges: how does one explain the rise of a radical idea, or ideology, which has been shaped by one socio-cultural milieu, in others far removed from the point of origin? Our study focuses on the emergence of one such ideology, Maoism (aka. Mao Zedong Thought 毛澤東思想, *Máo Zédōng Sīxiǎng*, inside China), and its emergence outside China in two specific cases in which shared political processes occurred to engender its rise. Despite a handful of existing studies on Maoism outside China, no previous effort that compares the connection between Maoism's diffusion abroad and similar political processes and responses to the crises of post-independence development in South American and Southeast Asia exists.

The failure of the Soviet brand of salvation to ameliorate conditions in the colonial and semi-colonial worlds, and China's lower stage of development, culminated in China's emergence as leader of a Third World revolution with Mao Zedong Thought, or "Maoism" as we refer to it outside of a Chinese context, as its shining beacon. As Mao believed, the "correct" 思想 (ideology, *sīxiǎng*), when "applied to the international scene," was the determining factor in a revolution's success (Hsiung, 1970; Hinton, 1980, pp. 1027-1048). In both Peru and Cambodia, our two cases, progressive intellectuals who founded Maoist movements, much like their Chinese and unlike their Euro-American counterparts, experienced global capitalism as an alien hegemony (Dirlik *et al.*, 1997, p. 70). And not unlike Mao before them, these men were networked individuals (Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, aka. Presidente Gonzalo, from Peru; Saloth Sar, aka. Pol Pot, his *nom de guerre*, short for *Politique Potentielle*, from Cambodia) in a situated thinking who, to borrow from Thomas S. Kuhn, "responded to crises" (colonial subjugation, underdevelopment, political corruption, capitalist exploitation, and socioeconomic disequilibria) by embracing Maoism as their guidepost.¹ Maoism, however, was not merely grafted onto the Cambodian or Peruvian situation; rather, as this paper shows, their *reception was dialectical in nature; they spoke back*

1. As Kuhn states: "Failure of existing rules is the prelude to a search for new ones." As for the response, he argues that when "Confronted with anomaly or with crisis, scientists take a different attitude toward existing paradigms, and the nature of their research changes accordingly." (Kuhn, 1970, p. 68, 90-91). I also thank Timothy Weston (CU-Boulder), Christina Till (University of Hamburg), and Shakhar Rahav (University of Haifa) for their input, and Wen-hsin Yeh, as discussant, for some of the terminology.

by adapting Maoism to *réalités concrètes*.² Their *reception*, moreover, led to the domestication of Maoism so that it spoke to their present situation and struggle.

Accordingly, we examine the two cases of Peru and Cambodia to trace preliminary threads between them via shared political processes and efforts to make the foreign familiar beyond a tight-knit group of *avant gardistes*. The first case, Peru, provides us with the only Latin American country wherein a Maoist Party (*Partido Comunista del Peru-Sendero Luminoso*, Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path) nearly seized power (Rothwell, 2013, p. 48). The Peruvian case conveys the ways in which a radical intellectual, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, combined Jose Mariátegui's concept of *indigenismo*³ and Andean cultural norms to make Maoism speak to the Party's would-be constituents,⁴ thereby adapting Maoism to *fit* Peru's geographical and cultural contexts. The second case in Cambodia yields much of the same, with Paris-trained, *Parti communiste français* (PCF) members encountering Maoism while pursuing advanced degrees in the 1950s and engaging with it dialogically and dialectically in terms of how it could be useful in addressing Cambodian crises. To make Maoism speak to a disenfranchised Cambodian peasantry to which none of the Paris Group had previous exposure, the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK, គណបក្សសក្តិមុខយនីសកម្ពុជា) marshaled it so that abstract terms spoke clearly to local grievances, notably rural plight, socioeconomic inequity, and political corruption.

How might one proceed in uncovering the forces at play that brought Maoism to the forefront and how radicals adapted it creatively to render it congruent with contemporary norms in their respective polities? Philip Kuhn's approach to explaining the ideal socio-contextual "fit" of exogenous ideas presents an important effort, and one that this study applies (Kuhn, 1977). Kuhn's methodology guides this paper's explanation of the rise of Maoism in both Peru and Cambodia as such a *fit: textual language, historical circumstances*, and the *process whereby such materials became important*

2. Sasha Sher states that these avant-garde writings on Cambodian society, along with the 1976 Four Year Plan, represent the "only written texts on the [CPK's] economic intentions for Cambodia" (Radio Phnom Penh "hardly gives much depth" on this aspect of the Party's vision) (Sher, 2001, p. 72).

3. Indigenismo: A Latin American social movement that pressed for an improved standard of living for the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Indigenismo also sought to grant a greater socio-political role for Indigenous peoples and demanded a more steadfast recognition of indigenous rights and including compensation and reconciliation.

4. Andean cultural and traditional norms: these include reciprocal justice, subsistence communal agriculture, the *Inkarri* myth, *Pankainti*, and the messianic notion of reuniting all the Andean peoples in a millenarian uprising against the state.

to others. Ours is thus a study that incorporates the myriad complexities of the vastly different locales (Peru and Cambodia) into understanding the lived cultures of our intellectuals (Guzmán and Sar) who became Maoists. We examine the following variables to explain Maoism's *fit* in both our cases: 1) exposure to Maoist texts, whether in China or not, in the intellectuals' language, and their intellectual engagement with them; 2) the conditions of their respective polities which made Maoism make sense as an alternative, radical course; 3) their creative adaptation of Maoism to make it speak to local grievances in their countries.

II. Making Sense of the Foreign: An Approach to the Problem of Ideas across Cultures

We begin with Philip Kuhn's tripartite method, which helps to explain the origins and cross-cultural dimensions of the Taiping vision. His approach to uncovering how thought is related to social experience (or to borrow from sociologist Karl Mannheim, a "social milieu;" Mannheim, 1936, p. 265), moves us toward uncovering what contexts/mindsets the Communists who espoused Maoism were in when they adopted and applied it. Kuhn's method is three-fold: 1) the precise language of the textual material that impinged on the host culture; 2) the underlying structure of the historical circumstances into which this material [was] introduced; and 3) the process whereby foreign materials became important to sectors of society *outside* the group that first appreciated and received it and thereby becomes a significant historical force. He applies this method to his analysis of how failed civil service student Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全, 1814-1864), a man who made sense of his vision upon a second reading of the modestly educated Liang A-fa's (梁發, 1789-1855) heavily politicized "hellfire and brimstone" Christian tract 勸世良言 (Good Words to Admonish the Age, *Quànshì liángyán*). Key to Kuhn's analysis is a group of bandits and radicals formed by Feng Yunshan (馮雲, Hong's cousin) called the 拜上帝教 (God-Worshipping Society, *Bàishàngdìjiào*) whose efforts reinforced shared dialect and faith founded on Hong's vision among the Guangxi Hakka in 1846. The Society, Kuhn argues, acted as the disseminators of Hong's vision to the Guangxi Hakka, who years later went on to support the Taiping movement. The chiliastic Protestantism that the God-worshipping Society preached ultimately fulfilled a *social need* for the Guangxi Hakka since the term "ethnicity" was merely a "free-floating variable that demanded a new set of concepts for its expression," and had "no firm social base" in Guangxi Hakka society.

Kuhn's study is particularly useful in relation to our case studies. Hong rejected Liang's politicization and did not have exposure to the conditions in

Guangxi, yet his vision reached an oppressed audience who used it to conceptualize their oppression in transcendent terms and to contextualize their subjugation in terms of a collective conscience. The same is true for Abimael Guzmán, a middle class intellectual with rural origins, and the CPK intellectual thrust, who all studied in Paris on elite scholarships. Although it was the “perfection of the ‘fit’ between Liang’s vocabulary and the underlying structure of the Hakka’s social plight that facilitated the doctrine’s reception,” it was ultimately the “larger *imperfection* of the ‘fit’ with the native culture”—the Chinese rejection of Christianity—that initiated such a change (Kuhn, 1977, pp. 350-366). This, too, is useful in explaining the rise of Maoism in the Peruvian and Cambodian Maoist movements. The relative failures of Marxism-Leninism as per the Soviet brand and the ongoing political corruption and wealth disparities in both countries’ rural sectors forced progressives to turn to more radical, practical alternatives. Both Guzmán and Saloth Sar had read Marxist and Maoist texts in their native tongues (Spanish and French), but it was their respective travels to China that served as a “Hong Xiuquan dream,” which prompted a revisiting of it and application to local conditions. Their subsequent engagement with Maoism made abstract materialist interpretations of socioeconomic inequality speak to local grievances (political corruption and rural/urban divides) not unlike the Taiping vision spoke to the Guangxi Hakka in transcendent terms. Kuhn’s three-part method is ultimately particularly useful to uncover how elite intellectuals, from Peru to Cambodia, received and normalized ideas and/or examples from without in their respective polities and mobilized it to speak to status societies in their home countries.

III. *Un Sendero Luminoso al Futuro: Maoism and the Shining Path’s Revolution in Peru*

On 18 May 1980, Peru held elections for a civilian President after twelve years of military rule. Just the day before, five masked members of the Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path set fire to ballot boxes in the Ayacucho village of Chuschi (Starn *et al.*, 1995, p. 87). Who were these masked revolutionaries? What was their message and purpose for such a surreptitious operation? The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path (hereafter the Shining Path or *Sendero* for short) adopted Mao Zedong Thought as the Party’s guiding ideology and launched a full-fledged socialist revolution. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) defined pre-revolution China with terms such as “semi-feudal” and “semi-colonial,” which resonated with Latin American Marxists who regarded their region as sharing the same fate (Rothwell, 2008, p. 107). That the Chinese revolution contained “lessons”

for Latin American societies led intellectuals, such as Shining Path founder Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, to embark on a patronage to Beijing where they studied Mao's works and trained in the military art of people's war.⁵ Mao's principle of people's war in particular, provided the Shining Path with a way of fighting and a way of life that embodied "a vision of man and society and an approach to development built on foundations of popular participation and egalitarian values." (Selden, 1971, p. 7). By the 1980s, the Shining Path consolidated itself as a Maoist organization and launched a protracted struggle that aimed—and almost succeeded—at toppling the Alberto Fujimori government in Lima.

By no means is this paper trying to exonerate or present an *apologia* of the Shining Path for its intra-Party violence and drug trafficking during and after the revolutionary struggle. Our study adopts scholarly neutrality, as best it can, to evaluate its case objectively. While the Shining Path undoubtedly used terrorism, betrayal, illegal transnational cocaine trade, murder, and during the waning years of the People's War, we must try not to fall into a temporal trap by foregrounding later, more radicalized methods at the expense of giving due attention to the Party's earlier policies of indigenous outreach (see Rothwell, 2013, pp. 60-66). Indeed, too often have scholars of *Sendero* relied solely on Truth and Reconciliation Commission tropes to foreground the later period to make the Party's radicalization, excessive violence, and drug trade, stand in for earlier policies of indigenous outreach.⁶ Seldom have scholars explored the much more compelling ways in which the Shining Path attained indigenous support, however minute, through the appropriation of Jose Mariategui's *indigenismo* policy of the 1920s and the evocation of Incan legends, culture, and history.⁷ *Sendero Luminoso*, as it referred to itself, tried to base its revolution organically. Accordingly, this section examines the

5. Rothwell (2008, p. 107). People's war had three protracted war stages: strategic defensive, strategic stalemate and the strategic offensive. People's War was not a strategy of aggression but instead was a strategy of aggressive defense. As Mao stated, "the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue." "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," (5 January 1930), in Mao (1965, vol. I, p. 124); "On Protracted War," (May 1938), in Mao (1965, vol. II, p. 115-117, 156).

6. The TRC, which was borne out of the aftermath of a two-decade long struggle between the Shining Path and the Fujimori government, brands *Sendero* as a terrorist group and has thus far failed to bring any truth or reconciliation to a struggling Peru. Racial discrimination and social divides remain dominant presences in the post-Fujimori years.

7. To localize Maoism, the CPP-SP appropriated Peru's socialist hero, Jose Carlos Mariategui and his theory of "indigenismo." Like Mao, Mariategui argued that a socialist revolution should evolve organically in a different context and be based on unique local conditions and practices rather than the result of applying a Eurocentric formula to a non-European context.

ways in which the Shining Path created a synthesis of Maoist precepts with Marategui's Peruvian socialism and Andean cultural norms.

Before exploring the Shining Path's adaptation of Maoism, we ought to investigate briefly the present scholarly arguments on *Sendero*, many of which differ on the degree to which the Party made Maoism appealing to locals. Some assert that the Shining Path never truly reached out to the indigenous population, instead betraying the Andean peoples through top-down elitist treatment of *indios* and, in cases, violence against them (Starn *et al.*, 1995, p. 305). Its relationship with peasants, one scholar notes, was ambiguous since the Party took "a top down approach" to their treatment of peasant and indigenous recruits. The Shining Path insisted that the Party had to serve the masses and bring them harmony, but had to "educate them and coerce them into support when necessary." (Degregori, 1992). *Sendero's* Maoism thus "eschewed completely any appeal to 'indigenous' or 'Andean' roots" while its political culture focused almost exclusively on class struggle, anti-imperialism, and on the Party's primacy in revolution (Starn, 1995, pp. 406-407). Others claim that Guzman's singular focus on ideological purity from the onset led to *Sendero's* downfall, namely that his "insistence on de-fining the Peruvian rural reality exclusively in the more abstract class terms of and peasant rather than on ethnic grounds of mestizo and Indian proved to be much less convincing to Peru's indigenous peasantry." (Palmer, 2014, p. 131). In so doing, *Sendero* "failed to build broad support among Peru's poor majorities" since their radical people's war in mountainous Ayacucho went down as "a gripping, yet historically doomed anachronism." (Starn *et al.*, 1995, pp. 306-307). *Sendero* "was supposed to be a creative acclimatiza-tion of Marxism to the Andean highlands," as Alex Cook notes, but instead "assimilated many of the same feudal and colonial social divides it had in-tended to destroy." (Cook, 2010, p. 307). Nowhere is this more evident than in the Party's forcibly imposed "war planting schedule upon the villagers" and its serious disruption of their intricate agricultural cycle (Isbell, 1988, p. 181). *Sendero*, in this view, was thus solely a movement of intellectuals, left-of-center activists, and disillusioned Peruvian youths (Degregori, 1990, p. 270; Masterson, 1999). One scholar goes so far as to state that it was "*never* a peasant-based insurgency" since the "strategic equilibrium" that *Sendero Luminoso*⁸ hoped to achieve in the countryside "*was never achieved because of the insurgency's misunderstanding and terrible abuse of the peasantry.*"

8. Sendero Luminoso: means "Shining Path" in Spanish. The nickname is homage to a maxim of Jose Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the original Peruvian Communist Party in the 1920s. The infamous phrase/slogan reads: *El Marxismo-Leninismo abrira el sendero luminoso hacia la revolución* (Marxism-Leninism will open the shining path to revolution).

The Party's shift of the anti-government campaign to Peru's capital and largest urban center in Lima alienated much of the Party leadership and "broke with Maoist principles."⁹ Its gradual withdrawal from the countryside "meant a cut off of modest outside support for projects like clinics, schools, and small irrigation projects." (Starn, 1991). This led to the emergence of peasant self-defense brigades known as *Rondas Campesinas*. As Peru's peasantry distanced themselves from the radical Maoist movement due to the insurgency's destruction of Peru's rural infrastructure, many peasants organized into defense brigades to ward off Shining Path members from entering the villages (Masterson, 1999).

The problem with such accounts, however, is that they do not acknowledge that the Shining Path's Maoism resonated with at least *some* groups of indigenous peoples, and not because the Party center merely grafted Maoist categories and analyses onto a host body. The Shining Path's appropriation of Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariátegui's ideology of *indigenismo* (*textual language*), the nature of Peruvian politics and society (*historical conditions*) and the subsequent synthesis of Maoist precepts with Incan cultural forms and traditions (*process whereby Maoism became important to others*) must receive due attention. While *Sendero* ultimately failed to consolidate the vast majority of peasant and indigenous masses into a broad mass movement, its efforts *did* resonate with at least *some* rural and indigenous peoples, however briefly, and certainly among students and intellectuals. Rather than rely solely on evidence forged around a temporal slippage, we must examine the ways in which Peru's marginalized Andean peoples may have endorsed *Sendero's* message, which means that we must examine how the Shining Path made Maoism speak to local grievances and outside of abstract materialist terms that only its intellectual thrust could understand in relevant ways. At the very least, *Sendero* succeeded in linking Maoism to the "disenchantment" of Ayacucho's students and intelligentsia, both of which "drew on the acute poverty and underdevelopment of the Ayacucho countryside to mobilize the initial social base" for the Shining Path's revolutionary struggle (Rothwell, 2013, p. 48).

It did not start that way. Long before the Shining Path presented a new face to Peru's political culture that encouraged indigenous peoples to reject the subordinate status that the central state had imposed on them for centuries (Cleary *et al.*, 2004, p. 43), the men who founded *Sendero* alongside pro-Chinese leftists visited China and studied Mao's works and Maoist tactics

9. Masterson (1999, pp. 181-184). Emphasis added. Masterson argues that the faith in the ability of Peru's indigenous population to rebuild the nation within the traditional communalistic framework *has never been expressed* by the self-styled CPP-SP.

closely there (Rothwell, 2013, p. 49). For instance, two leaders of the pro-China faction within the *Partido Comunista del Peru* (PCP), José Sotomayor and Manuel Soria, met with Chinese leaders, most notably Mao Zedong, in 1963 to discuss breaking from the Party and forming a Maoist faction. They had become pro-China by enrolling in a five-month seminar in 1959 that the People's Republic of China (PRC) held specifically to instruct Communists from Latin America in the lessons that the Chinese revolutionary experience had for world revolution, writ large. As Sotomayor describes, the courses discussed the following:

the works of Mao Zedong and the works of the Chinese leaders: the united front, the peasant question, the mass line, the armed struggle in the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese Party in conditions of clandestinity and while legalized, the struggles within the Party, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought. The speakers made a detailed exposition of each of these topics, in two or more sessions, and finally gave an account of books and pamphlets [that] should be consulted. All, absolutely all, were works by Mao Zedong." (Sotomayor Pérez, 1979, p. 48).

Students also toured China, visiting factories, schools, people's communes, and other sites that displayed vividly the triumphs of Chinese socialism in the daily lives of the Chinese people. Both Sotomayor and Soria met with Mao, who stressed the universal applicability of people's war in capturing state power from imperialists and semi-colonialists. While the meeting was brief, it was significant in that it at least gave the Peruvian Communists *sub rosa* endorsement from Mao, the chief strategist and revolutionary intellectual thrust behind the Third World movement against American and Soviet imperialisms.

The return to Peru by those who had participated in this Peruvian Communist delegation wrote about their encounters and experiences, and such writings—notably Carlos de la Riva's *Donde nace la aurora* (Where the Dawn is Born)—served would-be revolutionaries on the home front in Peru (Rothwell, 2013, p. 53). One such intellectual was Guzmán, who in 1965 attended a cadre training school in China. He described his experiences in the following passage:

I went to a cadre school... that had two parts, the first was political, it started with the study of the international situation and ended with Marxist philosophy, there were various courses and a second part which was military, held at a military school in Nanjing, where

I studied theory and practice in a deeper way. (Guzmán as quoted in Rothwell, 2013, p. 56).

When we were finishing the course on explosives, they told us that anything can explode. So, at the end of the course, we picked up a pen and it blew up, and when we took a seat it blew up too. It was a kind of general fireworks display. These were perfectly calculated examples to show us that anything could be blown up if you figured out how to do it. We constantly asked, “How do you do this? How do you do that?” They would tell us, don’t worry... Remember what the masses can do, they have inexhaustible ingenuity, what we’ve taught you the masses will do and will teach you all over again... That school contributed greatly to my development and helped me begin to gain an appreciation for Chairman Mao Tsetung. (Guzmán as quoted in Rothwell, 2013, p. 57).

In studying closely the Maoist canon (*textual language*) and techniques in waging people’s war, and later, witnessing the Cultural Revolution firsthand, Guzmán earned the socialist capital that he required to make a case for himself as a leader in the Peruvian Communist Party (Rothwell, 2013, p.57). He also became enamored with the Cultural Revolution-style of Mao-centric iconoclasm that would define *Sendero’s* movement and its leaders’ effort to launch a cult of personality of his own.

Politics in post-WWII Peru, and historical antecedents, also played a part in pushing progressive intellectuals further towards embracing Maoism. The political nature of Peru was characterized by the state’s concerted effort to eradicate the “ethnic question” and to “pauperize” its indigenous population. Peru’s indigenous peoples had yet to form a strong national movement because of such efforts, and lacked a united voice to challenge the state’s ongoing economic oppression.¹⁰ As Matthew Rothwell notes, the Shining Path’s revolution “drew on and was fueled by poverty and social alienation [that had] deep historical roots in Peru... [it] was an expression of the long-standing divergence between Lima and Peru’s vast Andean hinterlands.” (Rothwell, 2013, p. 48). The Shining Path was, however, far from the first to address this systemic socioeconomic issue in Peruvian politics and society. Decades before Guzman’s rise to political relevance, José Carlos Mariátegui,

10. Cleary *et al.* (2004, p. 52). *Campesin* (peasant) replaced *indio* (Indian) while *indígena* (indigenous) was reserved for the people from the easternmost forest region.

had emerged as one of the “few original Marxist theoreticians Latin America has ever produced,” (Alexander, 1999, pp. 153-154) placing the ethnic question front and center in his analysis of Peruvian economy and society. But who was Mariátegui and why did he matter to the Peruvian Maoists?

José Carlos Mariátegui was born on 14 June 1894 in Moquegua to Francisco Javier Mariátegui Requejo, a man who abandoned his family when José was still a boy, and María Amalia La Chira Ballejos. As a child, José endured a series of health problems that affected him for the rest of his life. But despite his physical ailments, his intellectual acuity was unsurpassed by his peers. He worked as a journalist (for *La Prensa* and *Mundo Limeño*, then *El Tiempo*), eventually launching his own periodical, *La Razón*, which marked his first forays into socialism and Marxist critical writing (Vanden, 2011; Mariátegui, 1997). By the late 1920s, Mariátegui gained recognition for recognizing that Peru was a plagued country that suffered from semi-feudal and semi-colonial subordination at the same time (“On New Democracy”, in Mao, 1965, vol. II, p. 341). While Marxian theory alienated world peasantries because of its singular, Eurocentric focus on industrial sectors, Mariátegui centered his ideas on the “reality of Peruvian poverty, race, class conflict, and neo-colonialism.” (Mariátegui, 1997, pp. 163-164; Masterson, 1999, pp. 172-174). He believed strongly that Peru offered a unique and interesting model for a groundbreaking form of Latin American socialism (Masterson, 1999, p. 174). Mariátegui identified in the “reciprocal communalism of Andean social tradition” a form of “communism.”¹¹ His Communism was, in his view, a great improvement over the highly “exploitative, individualistic, and foreign-dominated policies” that marginalized the indigenous peoples and stripped Peru of its burgeoning potential as a continental economic force. Mariátegui thus saw the solution to Peru’s semi-feudal and semi-colonial subjugation in the application of traditional Andean social models to a contemporary socialist Peruvian state (Masterson, 1999, p. 174).

One of the keys to understanding the importance of Mariátegui’s *indigenismo* and further contributions to modern Peruvian socialism¹² is to “recognize his unique willingness to use *traditional Andean social norms* as a

11. Mao Zedong was in the process of building his peasant-driven vanguard at around the same time. Mao Zedong, “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan,” (March 1927)

[http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_2.htm] (Accessed 27 January 2011).

12. Mariátegui emphasized the dignity of labor as a key element of the human condition, but unlike Marx, he did not view labor in exclusively economic terms. As Masterson notes, instead of “wedding himself to the concept of ‘surplus value’, Mariátegui viewed Andean labor in its variety of reciprocal forms as a means of maintaining values and community solidarity.” (Masterson, 1999, p. 174).

workable model” for Peru’s current historical contexts. The Peruvian Marxist asserted that traditional models of Andean socialism could be applied to modern contexts “if an efficient educational system emphasizing primary schooling for the masses, technical training, and a free and accessible university system was established as a foundation.” (Masterson, 1999, p. 174. Emphasis added). However, Mariátegui was not implying that Quechua¹³ Indian society required westernization of any sort. Rather, he argued that the *ayllu*—a system of production and community that dates back to Incan times—preserves two great economic and social principles: to “contract workers collectively and to have the work performed in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere of friendly competition.”¹⁴ Unfortunately, Mariátegui’s Peruvian innovation led to his dismissal from the Komintern conference in 1929, and he died soon afterward.¹⁵

Mariátegui’s political ex-communication and premature death notwithstanding, the ideas that he set in motion are relevant in explaining the dual nature of *textual language* in Sendero’s reception of Maoism. His work served as a *Good Words to Admonish the Age* that, upon a second reading after witnessing China’s Cultural Revolution—a Hong Xiuquan dream of sorts—Abimael Guzmán understood more fully and put in service to Sendero’s own radical vision and movement (*process of reaching others/adaptation*). As Rothwell contends, Sendero’s “most explicit adaptation of Maoism to Peruvian conditions was the attempt to assimilate Mariátegui’s work into a Maoist framework... re-conceptualizing Mariátegui in light of Mao... [and] domesticating Maoism to Peruvian conditions.” (Rothwell, 2013, p. 69). Lewis Taylor argues that Mao’s concept of semi-feudal and semi-colonial society proved “highly compatible with Mariátegui’s description of Peru in the first half of the twentieth century, with multiple coexisting worlds: indigenous peasant communities practicing primitive agrarian communism; colonial-era haciendas maintaining a feudal economy in the highlands; semi-feudal coastal estates producing crops for export; and bourgeois urbanites with ties to international capitalism.” (Taylor, 2006, pp. 10-11). Matthew Rothwell agrees, noting that a “Maoist reading of Mariátegui played an important role in how the Shining Path defined itself politically,” and his early death meant that his successors could interpret his “incomplete” quest openly (Rothwell,

13. Quechua: the name of a people of the central Andes of South America and the descendants of the Incas.

14. Mariátegui (1997, p. 61). He stated that that up to now “neither the science of sociology nor the empiricism of the great industrialists” have been able to solve these two great economic and social principles satisfactorily.

15. Alexander (1999, p. 154). Eudosi Ravines reorganized the Socialist Party as the Communist Party of Peru, which became a full member of the Comintern.

2013, p. 51). Guzmán explained in an interview that the more he read Mao Zedong's works, the more he began to see Mariátegui as a "first rate Marxist-Leninist who had thoroughly analyzed our [Peruvian] society."¹⁶ Mariátegui's focus on forming a rural base from which to launch a revolution against the forces that prevented the advancement of Peru's indigenous peoples became central to the formation of *Sendero* in the 1970s. It was not surprising, then, that Guzmán appropriated Jose Mariátegui, a man who spoke out in favor of improving the standard of living of the Andean peoples, and reconciled his own fascination with Maoism to create a new "sword of Marxism Leninism." Mariátegui ultimately provided the Shining Path with an analysis of Peru's society while Mao Zedong "provided the strategy to change it." (Cook, 2010, p. 305).

In 1970, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, then a philosophy professor at the National University of San Cristobal de Huamanga in Ayacucho, founded the "Shining Path"—a direct linguistic borrowing from Mariátegui's coining of the terms "the Shining Path to the future" in reference to Marxism (Gorriti, 1999, p. 46). Guzmán arrived in Huamanga in 1962 from middle-class origins in the town of Mollendo. A "reserved yet self-confident man" who donned the Andean dress, Guzmán was part of a radical current of intellectuals in Peruvian universities who would look to Marxism-Leninism and, later, Maoism, as radical alternatives to the corrupt political situation that had ravaged the country's disenfranchised poor and consolidated a wealthy urbanite class as sole beneficiary (Starn, 1995, p. 404). During the mid-1960s, Guzmán became an admirer of Mao Zedong, toured China during the later years of Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and received small arms training at a Chinese cadre school (Starn, 1995, p. 305; Cook, 2010, p. 304). Guzmán then broke from the Communist Party of Peru and implemented many of Mao's ideas, such as people's war, self-reliance, Third World anti-imperialism, and the Cultural Revolution (Starn, 1995, p. 404; Cook, 2010, p. 304).¹⁷ His avowal of Maoism is most evident in his claim that the Shining Path's armed struggle required the mobilization of the peasants "under the infallible banners of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought" (Guzmán, 1980). Guzmán's choice of Ayacucho as a base from which to launch the

16. "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo," in *El Diario*. Peru People's Movement trans. (Red Banner Publishing House, 1988), *Red Sun* ; [www.redsun.org/pcp_doc/pcp_0788.htm] (Accessed 7 January 2011)

17. The Shining Path emerged from factional politics within the Peruvian Communist Movement. Peruvian Maoists first split from the main Communist Party in 1964, rejecting Soviet and Cuban influences. According to Starn, Guzman "belonged to the Communist Party of Peru-Red Flag until 1970, when, apparently dissatisfied with the unwillingness of the leadership of Red Flag to take up arms against the Peruvian government, he led a splinter movement to found the Shining Path."

people's war revolution also mirrors Mao's base in the remote Chingkanshan Mountains where he fought three successive revolutionary civil wars against Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek (McClintock, 1984, pp. 83-84). As Guzmán's influence at the university waned, the Shining Path set up "popular schools" to "increase class-consciousness among the peasantry, working class, and students," which entailed instruction in Maoist texts and guerrilla-style training (Tarazona-Sevillano, 1990). He and his disciples highlighted the Peruvian state's corruption, its numerous failures and shortcomings, and Mariátegui's creative Marxist analysis of Peruvian society (Tarazona-Sevillano, 1990, p. 197). Popular schools also emphasized the "need for class struggle, the incompetence of parliamentary democracy... [and] the Shining Path's plan for securing *New Democracy*" (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, p. 164. Emphasis added)¹⁸ Guzmán soon gained a multifarious support base of former students and local peasants and declared a war against Peru's wealthy bourgeoisie. The people's war began with the Shining Path entering the first stage of Maoist revolution (agitation and propaganda) in late 1970. In true Maoist fashion, the Shining Path constructed their vanguard base on the backs of the country's peasantry,¹⁹ and called for a peasant rebellion against Peru's large landowners for oppressive policies that since the 1800s had marginalized the Peruvian indigenous and rural peoples.²⁰ Fernando Belaunde Terry's election in the early 1980s added fuel to the fire, as his newly reformed agricultural policies betrayed most of the country's agronomists in the southern highlands (McClintock, 1984, p. 64). *Sendero's* leadership saw an opportunity to appeal to the victimized "Indian" and wedded the suffering of the indigenous people to the Party's revolutionary program, guerrilla army,

18. Mao argued that revolutions in colonies, or semi-colonial semi-feudal states, had to take place in two stages: first, a "democratic revolution," carried out by an alliance of different classes, and afterwards a "socialist revolution." Even though he was adamant that the bourgeoisie were "unreliable allies who would turn tail at the first sign of trouble, the New Democracy phase of revolution was "necessary and cannot be dispensed with." Mao Zedong's emphasis on the power of the people as revolutionary forces further enhanced Mao's theory of New Democracy. China's new politics, economy and culture were "the politics, economy and culture of New Democracy," and called for the people to develop a revolutionary spirit that the Chairman himself regarded as the driving force behind New Democracy. It was the duty of people throughout the world to "put an end to the aggression and oppression perpetrated by imperialism." See "On New Democracy," in Mao (1965, vol. II, pp. 341-343).

19. Though the "peasantry" is an unclear social category because its meaning has been defined and redefined to the point of nearly rendering the group as useless, Allen Isaacman gives us a workable definition. See Isaacman (1993).

20. La Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, *Final Report*. Lima, Peru: Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, 2001. [<http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php>] (Accessed 11 January 2011). (Berg, 1986-1987, pp. 192).

and the new state that it hoped to establish in Lima after the successful fifth stage of Maoist revolution (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, p. 164).

The Andean peasants relied heavily on reciprocal economic justice and identified with the Shining Path because its operations “acted as a reflection, and an expression, of their own social and economic frustrations.” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2001). City dwellers paid very little for agricultural work and wealthy peasants did not make significant labor contributions. Many peasants resented the upper classes vehemently as a result, holding animosity toward Peru’s wealthy with some buying into *Sendero*’s social program of safeguarding indigenous rights. Through his use of respondent data from the Ayacucho region, historian Ronald Berg argues cogently that there was “considerable support” among pro-*Sendero* peasants for killing the mostly-*mestizo*²¹ Peruvian wealthy (Berg, 1986-7, p. 188).²² As a number of Andean peasants stated, “I have nothing against their killing the rich (los ricos)... I don’t like it when they kill peasants (campesinos) (Berg, 1986-7, p. 186).”²³ One sympathizer stated that the men who the Party killed “deserved what they got because they were rich, had two or three houses, and had acquired their wealth through unfair exchange (Berg, 1986-7, p. 187).”²⁴ Support for the Shining Path evidently grew because at least *some* peasants and indigenous peoples believed that it understood their aspirations, such as their desire to possess a measure of autonomy at the local level and the right to practice subsistence agriculture through land ownership.

The Shining Path also exploited the cultural significance of Incan myths and Andean symbolism to broaden its revolutionary support base (Arena and Arraigo, 2006, p. 163). Leaders, notably Guzmán, espoused elements of Quechua Indian culture, which Stefano Varese states “became increasingly evident” in the Party’s activities (1996, p. 65). The most culturally

21. Mestizo: The intermarriage of Spanish whites and indigenous peoples. The creole offspring dominated the hacienda economy for centuries and marginalized the Indian to near extinction.

22. As Berg notes, there was an ethnic dimension as well. As he states, the Spanish word “campesino contains both class and ethnic connotations. When asked to explain the term, people described a person who is “poor, like us,” i.e. like us of the villages. Yet there is a clear ethnic dimension as well, since the “rich “live in the towns, do not speak Quechua, practice standard Catholicism, and dominate the peasants. When people debated the morality of killing a person, the discussion centered upon whether or not, or to what extent, he or she was a campesino/a.”

23. That said, violence against peasants did occur. See Cleary *et al.* (2004, pp. 59-60).

24. Namely, unfair exchange meant the buying grain at a low price and selling it at a high price. According to Berg, the victims “had received bank loans, which gave them plenty of cash with which to buy materials and hire laborers, while others had nothing.”

significant myth was that of *Inkarri*, which recalls a sixteenth century event where the Spanish colonizers dismembered, scattered, and buried the body of the last Incan sovereign Tupac Amaru I. According to Arena and Arrigo (2006), the Shining Path represented its leader Abimael Guzmán as “the modern day incarnation of the Inkarri.”²⁵ (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, p. 163). *Sendero* posters portrayed Guzmán at the center “dressed in a suit, wearing glasses, [Mao’s red] book in hand, surrounded by masses carrying rifles and flags, with the great red sun setting behind him.” (Degregori, 1992, p. 62). Since Andean mythology held that the rise of the red sun meant the return of Inkarri, the Shining Path’s Indian followers gave Guzmán the Quechua title of “Red Sun:” *pukainti* (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, p. 163). The Shining Path’s Andean followers revered their new “Inca king” with “God-Sun adoration” and entrusted his Party to bring the impoverished descendants of the great Incans to a more prosperous and respectful future (Daly 1997; Fitzsimmons, 1993; Strong, 1992; Vásquez, 1993).

Another important symbolism that *Sendero* mobilized for its purposes was the story of Tupac Amaru I. The Spanish had celebrated the execution of Tupac Amaru I and placed his head on a stake to discourage further indigenous uprisings. The Shining Path argued that Tupac Amaru’s body, which stood as the quintessential Incan symbol for the dispersal of Indian tribes and the reverence of Incan cultural heroes, was slowly reconnecting in the forms of the Peruvian clandestine movements. Andean peoples believed that only when the desecrated head of Tupac Amaru I rejoined the rest of the body or grows its new body underground would the Inca nation rise up and obtain its pre-Columbian state of independence (Varese, 1996, p. 163). Shining Path cadres emphasized the 199th anniversary of the Spanish execution of the Quechua Incan rebel José Gabriel Condorcanqui, immortalized in Incan legend as “Tupac Amaru II.” In the eighteenth century, Condorcanqui launched a bloody anti-colonial revolution. The victorious Spanish captured Condorcanqui and sentenced him to death in the same brutal manner that the Spanish had killed Tupac Amaru I centuries before. Thus, according to Varese, the Andean tradition “unites symbolically all other Indian revolutionary heroes, such as Tupac Amaru I (16th century) and Tupac Amaru II (18th century)” (Varese, 1996, pp. 65, 70). After all, the Spanish ensured that the two indigenous leaders suffered the exact same symbolic fate of gruesome public dismemberment and disjointed burial across Peru’s highlands. The Shining Path promised that only when all the indigenous peoples of Peru lent their support to *Pukainti* and his Shining Path movement shall Peru’s “cos-mic race” obtain their long sought-after salvation. Ultimately, the Shining

25. Tupac Amaru I was also referred to by his divine name, Inkarri.

Path's appropriation of indigenous cultural and traditional norms positioned the guerrilla organization in place to use "ethnic survival" as part of its aggressive recruitment strategies (Arena and Arrigo, 2006, pp. 163-164).

To summarize the events that followed, the Shining Path completed the second, third, and fourth stages of Maoist revolution between 1980 and 1988. The people's war expanded, and by 1989, the guerrillas prepared to launch the people's war on Lima (Cook, 2010, p. 307). However, the fifth and final stage that entailed the fall of the cities was never achieved. Nevertheless, the Shining Path succeeded in launching "the largest insurgency on Peruvian soil since the Tupac Amaru II rebellion two centuries before." (Starn *et al.*, 1995, p. 305). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted that the armed conflict between 1980 and 2000 "constituted the most intense, extensive and prolonged episode of violence in the entire history of the Republic."²⁶ As the people's war raged on, the Shining Path radicalized increasingly and launched brutal internal purges to ensure longevity and loyalty. Abimael Guzmán, now named "Presidente Gonzalo"²⁷ (Cook 2010, pp. 304-305), took advantage of his personality cult status and taught his five thousand armed guerrillas that the Russians, Cubans, the Chinese, and North Koreans were "weak and not true Communists" (Senate Congressional Record, 1998). The Shining Path's official party ideology ceased to be "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism," and instead became "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism-Gonzalo thought." (Gorriti, 1999, p. 185). But Peruvian forces captured the "great teacher" in 1992 and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Although the People's War continued in an ever-degenerating state, Abimael "Presidente Gonzalo" Guzman's incarceration and subsequent official statement from prison effectively ended the Maoist revolution in Perú.

While one cannot deny that the Shining Path was a violent revolutionary movement, the Party succeeded in domesticating Maoism and in reinvigorating Mariátegui's *indigenismo* to serve its purposes in contemporary Peru. Whether historians classify *Sendero* as terrorists, revolutionaries, or freedom fighters, it challenged the corrupt and anti-*indigenismo* Peruvian state and exposed the limits of Peruvian agency. Its earlier devotion to indigenous

26. La Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, *Final Report*. Lima, Peru: Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, 2001. [<http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php>] (Accessed 11 January 2011)

27. Guzmán described himself as the "greatest living Marxist-Leninist." As the intellectual successor to Marx, Lenin, and Mao, his "Gonzalo Thought" became the "Fourth Sword of Marxism. According to Starn, a Mao-like personality cult developed around Guzmán very early in the movement, and the CPP-SP would later make use of such Cultural Revolution agitprop staples as incendiary wall posters and dunce caps for enemies, even to the point of reciting Mao songs in Mandarin. Starn (1995, p. 276).

activism and social reform, however flawed and misguided at times, must not be shrouded by their later extremism and controversial methods. *Sendero* managed to plant the seeds of Maoism in the Andes Mountains and watched it grow into a formidable anti-government movement that owed to Mariátegui's earlier formulations and its own Maoist attempts to wed foreign theory to concrete national practice. While not without fault on many accounts, *Sendero's* effort to apply the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism to concrete realities in Peru kept in line with Mao's own emphasis on uniting knowing and doing, and making abstract thought *fit* national conditions to resonate with the people that its message hoped to reach (Knight, 1990, p. 148; Mao, 1983-6, p. 234).

IV. "We Must Combine Theory and Practice": Maoism and the Cambodian Revolution

For decades, the highly secretive, seemingly amorphous CPK have eluded scholarly classification, declaring that "[w]e are not following any model, either Chinese or Vietnamese... the Cambodian situation does not fit any existing model and thus requires original policy." (Der Spiegel, 1977). Early descriptions of the CPK's program varied, characterizing it as "rabidly fascist," a form of "medieval barbarity," or that its apparent obsession with past glory and national-revival was the basis of its radical social transformation.²⁸ More recently, scholars either foreground CPK nationalism, or state that it copied the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) blueprint (Kiernan, 1985, pp. 219-224; 1996, pp. 25-7; Heder, 2004, p. 3; Harris, 2007, p. 49, p. 65). An intriguing description that is most relevant for this study is that the CPK was far from *sui generis*, anti-modern, or bereft of cultural and intellectual sophistication, but in fact "Maoist"/"hyper-Maoist." (Morris, 1999; Locard, 2005; Jackson, 1989; Quinn, 1982; Frieson, 1988, pp. 405-406). Supporters of this description identify similarities in rhetoric, revolution, and socio-economic transformation, but they fail to explain how and why Maoism arose as a "fit" for the Cambodian context. The CPK was indeed Maoist, but we need a more thorough explanation of how and why Maoism and not, say, Soviet Marxism-Leninism, emerged among the CPK's intellectual thrust. If we are to classify them more appropriately and accurately as Maoist, then we require a genealogy of Cambodian Maoism that begins with the social experiences of the would-be Maoists, delving deeply into their travels, encounters, and ever-shifting *weltanschauungen*.

28. Vasilkov described the CPK as fascist in Vasilkov (1979, pp. 44-45).

The CPK founders' time in Paris, where they read Mao's work for the first time and, later, became Communists and Maoists, allows us to identify the point of origin in their interest in Maoism (*textual language*). Membership in the *Cercle Marxiste* and its governing body, the Stalinist *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), gave them the brass tacks on the leftist canon and organizational structure. Pol Pot, among others, discussed Lenin's "On Imperialism," Marx's *Das Kapital*, "Dialectical Materialism," and *The Communist Manifesto*, Stalin's collected works, and Mao Zedong's *La nouvelle Démocratie* and *Lectures choisies des Oeuvres de Mao*. All *Cercle* members contemplated these works in French, though they conversed in Khmer as well since some political terms lacked Khmer equivalents (Chandler, 1999; Tyner, 2008). Importantly, however, *Cercle* participants did not merely *read* and *discuss* Marxism; rather, they interpreted Marxism through the lens of national culture, which for them was Khmer Buddhism. While the CPK later banned Buddhism and defrocked monks, in their Paris years as before, Buddhism was inseparable from Cambodian identity (Harris, 2013; Short, 2004). Saloth Sar (aka. Pol Pot), among other future CPK founders, became revolutionary intellectuals who were convinced that Marxism-Leninism, and later, Maoism, could transform Cambodia from a corrupt monarchical state into a nation that served the people (Galway, 2017, pp. 184-198).

Politics on the home front also played their part in pushing the Paris Group of Cambodian students towards Maoism (*historical conditions*). Sihanouk had dissolved the National Assembly in January 1949 and ruled by imperial decree, which angered a Democratic Party that had lobbied for a popular vote. The tipping point for the Paris students was the January 1950 assassination of Democrat leader Ieu Kouess by an associate of Sihanouk's uncle, Norodom Norindeth, which left students with few political options. The Democrats continued their push for elections, which they gained in 1951, and anti-Sihanouk demonstrations in May 1952 among students in Cambodia gave indications that the monarchy could no longer ignore calls for reform. From Paris, Saloth Sar's colleague and future CPK founder Hou Yuon penned a letter in which he lauded the demonstrators' efforts, situating their protests in a global context: "These positive developments have become normal throughout the world, whether in the European countries or the Asian ones, and especially in the countries where independence is being sought." (Hou Yuon, as quoted in Kiernan, 1985, p. 121). The French position on Sihanouk was also a locus of considerable contestation because they had cast him as the only hope for political stability, a position that infuriated the pro-democracy Paris Group. As the French military commander General Pierre de Langlade declared, "Democracy had no hope [here]... The parliamentary experiment has failed... The Sovereign remains the only person capable of giving Cambodia political direction... [He is] heir to the ... mystique

of the God-Kings, who for thousands of years have guided the destinies of the land... Everything in this country has to be done by the King.” (Short, 2004). Sihanouk thus had unchecked power, and again dissolved the Assembly on 15 June 1952 in a coup d'état. Sihanouk's corruption had prompted the Paris Cambodian intellectuals to embrace the Stalinism and dogmatism (and accompanying emphasis on clandestinity and organization) of the PCF. In response to Sihanouk's coup, Keng Vannsak levied harsh condemnation in a 1952 issue of the AEK publication ឧប្បន័និសុសិត (Khmer Student), declared that:

We, Khmer students of the AEK, consider that Your Majesty has acted illegally... and that the policy of the Throne... will inevitably lead our Khmer Motherland into an abyss of perpetual slavery... In your message to the nation, [you said that] Cambodia faces ever greater dangers... What should the people think when Your Majesty's Palace has become a lobby for dishonest dealings which place within your hands the riches of the country and the people?... Corruption in our country stems from the Throne and spreads down to the humblest officials. The French oppress the whole country, the King trades his Crown, the Palace and its parasites such the people's blood... These are the main causes of our country's critical situation today... Your Majesty has sought to divide the nation in two: the royalists, and those who struggle for independence. [Your] policy is to set Khmers against Khmers... (Khmer Student 14, 1952, as quoted in Short 2005, p.78)²⁹

Yet *Cercle* members realized the limits of theory (their two years of reading radical texts in Paris had not brought them closer to reform), and they took a radical turn, forming the pro-PCF *Union des Etudiants Khmers* (UEK) on 26 November 1953 (Kiernan, 1985, p. 121). As Khieu Samphan, who assumed leadership of the UEK in 1957, recalled: “my studies as well as my experiences convinced me that the only way of implementing our ideals in general, and of building up our backward agriculture in particular, is socialism. Thus, I became a communist. I did so out of objective conviction and not out of daydreaming.” (Pilz, 1980). Sihanouk's dissolution of the Democratized assembly in June 1952 exacerbated the Paris Groups' radicalization, with students flocking *en masse* to join the PCF (Chandler, 1991, p. 8). In the PCF, Sar, and his colleagues learned the effectiveness of staying out of sight and

29. As Short notes, this issue was in handwritten Khmer. Short credits Ben Kiernan and Mey Mann for French versions.

mind, especially in light of the French government's crackdown on scholarship student participation in Parisian leftist groups (Chandler, 1986, pp. 132-133; Sher, 2004, p. 30; Etcheson, 1984, p. 174). By 1952, they had all "vowed a lifelong commitment" to Communism, and never looked back (Chandler, 1999, p. 28).

Maoism was the next logical step. As *Cercle* founder and Sar's protégé Keng Vannsak stated in an interview, "We wanted to take power and believed that we could do so only with popular support, which necessarily means violence. We opposed the PCF's view that we could come to power through universal suffrage." (Martin, 1994, p. 99). Sar had by this time returned to Cambodia (1953) to take up a regional cell secretary position in the Vietnamese-directed KPRP, yet frustration mounted among cadres, who tolerated rather than embraced Hanoi's helmsmanship over the Cambodian Working Bureau in eastern Cambodia, and awaited directives from Hanoi on what to do next. In Paris, the PCF discarded Stalinism (alienated by Soviet revisionism and swept up in the tide of decolonization in France's former colonies), while Cambodian radicals had grown tired of Russian and Vietnamese support of their nemesis Sihanouk (Bourg, 2005, pp. 472-490). As Vannsak, who had returned to Paris to finish his invention, the Khmer typewriter, elaborates: "At the beginning, we were very Stalinist... We turned toward China in the late 1950s because the Russians were playing the Sihanouk card and neglecting us... *When everyone began to criticize Stalin, we became Maoists.*" (Martin, 1994, p. 99; Sher, 2001, p. 119. Emphasis added).

Why? One answer is because Soviet de-Stalinization and "revisionism" propelled many radical students in Paris toward looking to Communist China for answers to crises in Cambodia. The other is that Maoism provided an alternative; it was borne from the Chinese revolutionary experience, stressed practice over dogmatism, discarded the Eurocentrism inherent in Marxism-Leninism, and contained emancipatory features. Marxism's "liberating possibility" only became a reality when "rephrased in a national voice, for a Marxism that could not account for a specifically national experience... replicated in a different form the hegemonism of capitalism [under the guise of universalism]." (Dirlik *et al.*, 1997, p. 70). Yet it was not until Sar, who had read Mao's works while in Paris, returned from a trip to Beijing in 1965-1966 that Maoism became *the* guiding force of the Cambodian revolution.

The CPK's adaptation of Maoism, whereby it rendered Mao Zedong Thought into something that spoke to its people and movement, began with Sar's return from Beijing in 1966 as a "faith Maoist," a visit that serves as a "Hong Xiuquan dream" that compelled him to revisit the Maoist texts that

he had read closely while a student in Paris (*adaptation*).³⁰ Sar stayed at the 亞非拉培訓中心 (Asian, African, and Latin America Training Centre, *Yà fēi lā péixùn zhōngxīn*) just outside of Beijing upon his arrival in late 1965. The precise dates and length stay of Saloth Sar's 1965-1966 visit to Beijing are unknown. In accordance with the CCP's adherence to the Five Peaceful Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and its existing treaty of noninterference with Cambodia, the official Chinese line was that Sar ought to support Prince Sihanouk, who was an important strategic ally to the PRC. This meant that the CCP did not publicize the young Cambodian Communist's visit to Beijing, and the Chinese officials who met with Sar (David Chandler names CCP General Secretary Deng Xiaoping, Head of State Liu Shaoqi, and Kang Sheng) could not endorse the Cambodian Communist movement outright.³¹ Regardless of the secrecy that surrounded the trip, the CCP viewed it as within the bounds of its existing treaty with Sihanouk so long as any encouragement that they voiced for Sar was *sub rosa* (Kiernan, 1985, p. 210). The Cambodian movement's inability to reciprocate any aid to China meant that any Chinese offer of material support would not violate its existing deal—the Cambodian Communists still responded to Hanoi, and the Kampuchean Worker's Party (KWP) was not yet in a position to offer fair exchange due to its limited base areas and small membership.

Sar's visit coincided with events in the PRC that left a lasting imprint on him. For instance, Sar experienced to some degree the rising tide of Maoist revival that came with the Socialist Education Movement (SEM), which placed primacy on curbing cadre corruption in rural areas and broadened previous campaigns to *include* rather than exclude peasants (MacFarquhar, 1983, p. 218; Kiernan, 1996, pp. 125-126). Then there was Lin Biao, the champion of faith Maoist zealotry, who had released his seminal pamphlet "Long Live the Victory of People's War!" only months before Sar's arrival. While Vietnam was preoccupied with the war against American imperialism, Lin's lauding of the effectiveness and universal applicability of Mao's military strategy cast light on to a tried and true method to defeat a numerically and technologically advanced adversary. His emphasis on indigenous self-sustaining revolution "struck a sympathetic chord with Sar," as did Mao's emphases on permanent revolution, the role of subjective forces in waging struggle, and the inclusion of peasants into the revolutionary vanguard under the directorship of the proletariat (Chandler, 1999, p. 73). Mao's heir apparent also applied people's

30. "Faith" and "Bureaucratic" strands of Maoism from Cheek (1997, pp. 12, 219-220).

31. Official Chinese sources did not begin to identify the CPK until 1975, and even then, the focus was more on Lon Nol's regime. Such official documents make virtually no reference to Pol Pot.

war macrocosmically to the entire world, wherein the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America would “encircle the cities”—the first and second worlds—much like China had done by 1949 (Cook, 2010, pp. 290-291; Short, 2004, pp. 159-160). This application served to recognize smaller, underdeveloped countries like Cambodia as valuable actors in a global struggle against super-power domination. Cambodia thus had incredible potential if its movement could just get off the ground.

As for the CCP response to Sar’s arrival, CCP members Deng Xiaoping, Mayor and First Secretary of the Beijing Committee of the CCP Peng Zhen, and Liu Shaoqi welcomed him with a warm reception.³² Sar likely spoke to his hosts through an interpreter since he did not speak Chinese. Mao apparently read a translated version of Sar’s program and lauded it overall, calling his class analysis and assessment of Cambodian realities by-and-large correct (Goscha, 1989; Chandler, 1999, p. 72; Kiernan, 1981, p. 178; Frings, 1997, pp. 838-839). Alternate member of the CCP Politburo Kang Sheng even touted him as the “true voice of the Cambodian revolution,” implying that the Chinese Foreign Ministry supported “a reactionary prince” by keeping its ties with Sihanouk intact (Byron and Pack, 1992, pp. 356-357). A Vietnamese source states that Chinese officials supported his programme, stating that the “Cambodian Party, like any other Party, must deal with American imperialism immediately as well as when they widen the war in Indochina... Every Party, including the Cambodian Party, has the task of fighting American imperialism in order to preserve peace and neutrality... And if one desires to oppose the plots of American imperialists, including their plot to escalate [the war], then one must take hold of the peasantry.” (Engelbert and Goscha, 1995, pp. 79-80, 102). Pol Pot recalled this vote of confidence in a 1977 interview: “Our Chinese friends whole-heartedly supported our political line, for they were then battling revisionism at a time when classes were struggling with each other at the international level... It was only when we [the Khmer Communists] went abroad that we realized that our movement was quite correct and that our political line was also fundamentally correct.” (Engelbert and Goscha, 1995, p. 79) CCP approval of Sar’s programme reinvigorated his sense of revolutionary worth. It was from then on that he pinned the Cambodian Communists’ star to Maoism instead of VWP’s course, and he returned to Cambodia in 1966 with “a few pieces of French translations of *Selected Works of Mao*” with the intent to plot his movement against Sihanouk’s Government (Short, 2005, p. 160).

32. Despite their inclination to a bureaucratic Maoist approach, these officials still cited pieces by Mao and supported his “people’s war” and “three worlds” theory that were prominent at this time.

In September 1966, Sar's faith Maoist influence began to take shape in the form of some important changes that he put into effect within the WPK. In 1966 he officially changed the WPK's name to the Chinese-influenced "Communist Party of Kampuchea" (CPK)—a name that remained in effect until the Party's dissolution in 1981. The CPK also established two new journals that reflected his adherence to faith Maoism: 1) ទង់ក្រហម ("Red Flag"), which was a Cambodian equivalent of the Great Leap Forward-era Chinese journal *Red Flag*; and 2) រស្មីក្រហម ("Red Light"), which borrowed its name from a Chinese student newspaper that emerged in France in the 1920s (Kiernan, 1985, pp. 219-224; Carney, 1977, p. 24; Daubier, 1974, p. 226). But perhaps the best indicator of this shift is a letter penned by Sar (most likely translated from French into Chinese by an interpreter, as Sihanouk had used in meetings with Chairman Mao) that he sent to Beijing in 1967:

Comrades, we are extremely pleased to report that in terms of ideological outlook, as well as our revolutionary line, that we are preparing the implementation of a people's war which has been moved towards an unstoppable point. Simultaneously, in terms of organization, there are also favorable circumstances, as well as for the execution of working affairs. Thus, we dare to affirm that: although there are obstacles ahead, we will still continue to put into effect the revolutionary work according to the line of the people's war which Chairman Mao Zedong has pointed out in terms of its independence, sovereignty, and self-reliance." (Engelbert and Goscha, 1995, pp. 80-81).

Here, Sar makes several Maoist precepts central to the Cambodian revolution, many of which he had certainly read about while a student in Paris (namely the 1951 French-language edition of Mao's "On New Democracy" – see Mao, 1951).³³ Yet his experiences in Beijing showed him firsthand the rewards of such theories if followed. As he recalled in a 1984 *Cai Ximei* interview, "[w]hen I read Chairman Mao's books, I felt that they were easy to understand" (Pol Pot, 1984; Short, 2004, pp. 477, 70). Pol Pot seldom shied away from boasting of Democratic Kampuchea's "Chinese friends to the north" who "gave us [the CPK] the advantage" in the struggle against

33. Pol Pot's mentor in Paris, Keng Vannsak, recalled that "Au début nous étions très stalinien... nous nous tournés vers la China à la fin des années cinquantes car les russes jouaient la carte de Sihanouk et nous négligeant... Quand le monde a commence e critique Staline, on est devenue maoistes. (At the beginning we [the Cambodian *Cercle Marxiste*] were very Stalinist... We turned toward China in the late 1950s because the Russians were playing the Sihanouk card and neglecting us... When everyone began to criticize Stalin, we became Maoists)." Martin (1989, p. 105).

imperialism (Pol Pot, 1977). He valued the Thought of Mao Zedong above all else, claiming that Mao Zedong Thought “is the most precious aid... Comrade President Mao never ceased his support to support our efforts [and] we express with deep emotion our respect for his and the CCP’s heroic and unswerving commitment to the international Communist movement”(Pol Pot, 1977b, p. 8; 1978, pp. 1-19). The suppression of high-ranking left-minded government ministers in the wake of Samlaut notwithstanding, the CPK, now equipped with Maoism as its principal weapon, grew to become the preeminent revolutionary Party in Cambodia (Mertha, 2014, p. 22).

The 1965-1966 visit was an intellectual awakening for Sar, and his experiences there convinced him that Lin Biao’s faith Maoism could reverse the Cambodian revolution’s stagnation. Although Sar initially sought help from China as a reaction to Vietnamese paternalism, the visit to Beijing convinced him that Maoist China was *the* leading force of a worldwide Third World movement. Cambodia became an epicenter for China’s Third World outreach, as the hosting of foreign revolutionaries, regardless of whether they stood as national leaders or potential opposition forces, lent revolutionary credence to their just struggles against imperialism. In a 1977 issue of 人民日報 (People’s Daily), the resonating force of Saloth Sar’s visit and conversion to Maoism was loud and clear:

For us, the parliamentary road is not feasible. We have studied the experience of world revolution, especially the works of Comrade Mao Zedong and the experience of the Chinese revolution of the period that has an important impact for us. After assessing the specific experience of Kampuchea and studying a number of instances of world revolution, and particularly under the guidance of the works of Comrade Mao Zedong, we have found an appropriate line with China’s specific conditions and social situation for the realities of Kampuchea. Thus, our Party committee set the Party’s line, and this line was debated and approved by the first congress, held at Phnom Penh on September 30, 1960. (Rénmín Ribào, 1977; Tribunal Populaire Révolutionnaire Siégeant à Phnom Penh pour le Jugement du Crime de Génocide Commis par la Clique Pol Pot-Ieng Sary, 1979).

Here, Pol Pot identifies that he and his comrades had read Mao’s works before the 1960 founding of the Party, though the actual date for its first congress remains was 1951—long before Pol Pot’s turn to Communism (Yuvachun Padevat, 1976, p. 3). Though antedating his 1966 visit, Pol Pot’s interest in China and Maoism, which began in Paris, came together as he realized the stagnation of the Vietnamese-led KPRP/WPK. Although Pol Pot wanted

revolution against Sihanouk, he had to obey his VWP superiors, who wanted the Prince's favor so that they could transport arms to guerrillas fighting in South Vietnam via Cambodian territory. Not unlike Hong Xiuquan, who had the "Taiping vision" after reading (and initially dismissing) Liang A-fa's *Good Words*, Pol Pot's 1966 visit to Beijing gave him the "dream" that would make Mao's ideas (as he read in Paris) important to him. Thereafter until the demise of Democratic Kampuchea, Pol Pot regarded Communist China and Mao Zedong as the brilliant beacons on world revolution.

The flight of the leftist, Paris-educated group, too, brought an intellectual component to the fledgling Party, as these men had *adapted* Maoism on paper as a *fit* for Cambodia while in Paris (Galway, 2017, pp. 203-229). As they capitalized on peasant fervor that arose with Samlaut, the meeting of the two strands (Sar's "faith" Maoism and the managerial Maoism of the former ministers) into a single cohesive Cambodian Maoism under Sar's leadership led the CPK to mobilize peasants. CPK leaders spoke in a political language of traditional society and a rational-bureaucratic language of modernizing states (Jowitt, 1993, p. 4, 16-18), as Mao had done in Sinifying Marxism. As Hinton describes, the CPK "combined new and old into ideological palimpsests, sketched upon the lines of cultural understandings, at once transforming and transformed." (Hinton, 2009, p. 85). Its "national democratic revolution" thus represents the adaptation of Mao's Yan'an canon (and, vicariously, the Cambodian intellectuals' dissertations for that matter) (Tung Padevat, 1976, p. 76). But how exactly did the CPK rally peasants to its revolutionary cause?

Growth in CPK support stemmed from its peasant outreach, which consisted of efforts to make its ideology speak to rural cleavages and grievances. The Second Indochina War and the fallout of the US secret bombings of Cambodia during Operation Menu (18 March 1969-26 May 1970) played their part (Shawcross, 1985),³⁴ and the Party received a significant boost when in 1970 the deposed Sihanouk, whose reverence among peasants was substantial irrespective of his corruption, lent his support for the CPK. Yet the Party's capitalization of rural problems, about which they had theorized in Paris and fought for from political or revolutionary posts, allowed them to penetrate into peasant society despite their elite origins. Sihanouk certainly helped in this regard; several campaigns throughout the 1960s, including the resettlement of landless peasants in Battambang and the exploitative *ra-massage du paddy* (which established a lucrative rice export industry that

34. By 1969, US forces had conducted 454 covert missions in Cambodia, which increased to 558, and then 1,885 by 1972. Estimates of Cambodian casualties of the 1969-1973 bombing campaigns "run as high as 150,000." Tyner (2008, p. 69). See also Clymer (2007, p. 137).

only benefitted merchants) had worsened many peasants' lot (Kiernan, 1982; Tyner, 2008; Chandler, 1991, p. 164). The CPK recognized their plight, and sought to "give leadership to the movement" and "suspended temporarily the armed struggle in Battambang until the whole country could complete its preparations." (Pol Pot, 1977, pp. 38-39). As Sar elaborates in a particularly Maoist fashion:

We proceeded according to the line that we traced for ourselves already. We needed to keep the *principal contradictions* in sight at all times. The principal contradictions were with *imperialism* and the *feudal, landlord system*, which we had to combat. As to the *secondary contradictions*, they had to be resolved by reciprocal concessions that allowed the union of all the forces against imperialism, particularly American imperialism, and the system of the feudalists, landlords, and reactionary "compradores". ... Our policy had to be correct, that is to say, our reasons were founded. *We had to make sure they could understand those reasons*. It was equally important for our policy to *conform with their interests for them to give us their support*. We talked to them, had meetings with them. Sometimes they agreed with us, sometimes they did not. We came back again and again. First they did not see the true nature of American imperialism. But over time, they came to view it increasingly clearly and united with us to combat it, to win independence, peace, and neutrality." (Pol Pot, 1977, pp. 30-31. Emphasis added).

The CPK's approach to recruiting peasants shared much in common with Mao's during the Chinese Civil War. As Mao mobilized peasants on a range of grievances and exploited every possible cleavage as a way to build popular support, so too did the CPK, whose cadres "live[d] in the midst of the people, in close touch with them, like them, and serve them heart and soul." (Sary, 1970). Both assessed their country as backward, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal states that bore the brunt of an agonizing war of imperialist aggression, and carried confidence in persevering against all odds by way of self-reliance and the people's indomitable revolutionary spirit. For the CPK as with the CCP, it was necessary that the national revolution based itself in the "*réalités concrètes* [concrete conditions]" in the country (Pol Pot, 1977, pp. 70-71).

To "sell" its Maoist vision to Cambodians, the CPK needed to pitch it to ordinary people in a way that tapped into local frustrations while also selling its vision of a modern nation. This meant that it ought to spark "class ardor and fury" among workers and peasants by marshaling their Maoist class analysis into something that "tapped into preexisting feelings of dissatisfaction,

unrest, anger, and spite,” thereby instilling revolutionary political consciousness (Hinton, 1998). This entailed portraying itself as the genuine representative of the workers and peasants, which it did via radio broadcasts and speeches. During the Party’s struggle against the right-wing deposer of Sihanouk, Lon Nol (1970-1975) (Thion, 1981), it broadcast via secret radio its devotion to the workers and peasants. “In Cambodia’s history of struggle,” a May 1971 broadcast stated, “Cambodian workers and peasants constituted a basic force in which Cambodian workers were always the most advanced, most valiant, and most active vanguard.” (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1971b). Another asserted that the CPK was a “Party of the workers and representative of the interests of the people and... of the nation and youth.” (Revolutionary Youth, No. 2, as quoted in Carney, 1977). Though the Party later stressed that the peasants, who (echoing Samphan’s assessment in 1959) constituted 85% of the nation’s populace, was the vanguard force, this earlier proclamation represents one of the earliest and few remaining evidences of CPK avowal of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Speeches on the frontlines or in the camps were equally effective, especially when given by the Party’s charismatic intellectual thrust. CPK candidate member Ith Sarin remembers that at a 10 May 1972 mass meeting in *Kat Phlouk* primary school in Tonle Bati, “Mr. Hou Yon [Hou Yuon] gave a two-hour speech [that] was much applauded.” (Sarin, 1977, p. 34).

The Party also tried its hand at politicization. Sar emphasized that the principal contradiction was in fact between the landlords and the peasants, thus Party leaders believed that peasants would endorse the CPK program of “independence-mastery [ឯករាជ្យយុគាណ-មុច្ចាស់]” and espouse its guiding Maoist ideology through “seepage’ [ការជ្រុះរាប],” (Hinton, 2009, p. 87) which sought to turn ordinary people into extraordinary revolutionaries. The CPK carried out “intensive agitation work” among the peasants, organizing them into “patriotic peasants’ associations” and document reading groups (Sary, 1970; Sarin, 1977, p. 51). Through this, the Party hoped to feed peasant hatred of corrupt urbanites, the evil feudal lords, and the oppressive US imperialists. Party promises to restructure all of Cambodia’s relations of production to destroy feudalism and end exploitation of the peasants and workers also helped convince many to lend their support to the CPK, with leaflets concentrating on succinct, simplified descriptions of the core themes of the dissertations by Yuon, Samphan, and Nim. One leaflet explained to peasants that feudalists and capitalist enemies “live in affluence at the expense of the working class and the masses,” who “live in misery, bled by them.” (Kiernan, 1985, pp. 231-232). An issue of Party newspaper យុវជននិងយុវនារីបដិវត្តកម្ពុជា (Revolutionary Youth) identified these same classes as regarding youths from the rural poor as merely a “source from which they can suck out their interests in the most delicious manner and as

a major source of strength to perpetuate their oppression and protect their treasonous state power.” (as quoted in Carney, 1977, p. 31). The CPK also reached out to the Buddhist *Sangha*, which often served as a link between periphery and core, spiritual and mundane. As Ieng Sary noted in a 1972 pamphlet, monks “have been the only literates,” held tremendous appeal among peasants, and represent a cultural nexus of power in the countryside. Cambodia’s history, Sary continues, was replete with “heroic feats against colonial rule creditable to the ‘achars,’ who are former Buddhist monks... in our revolutionary war of national and popular liberation, they take an active part in the mobilization of the patriotic forces... the Buddhist monks fight stubbornly out of ardent patriotism” (Sary, 1970, pp. 13-14). Support from Buddhist monks joined with the Party’s ability to posit itself as the Party of the desolate poor to give the CPK legitimacy in Cambodia’s rice regions. The Party’s ranks ultimately swelled with fed-up peasants who subscribed to the millenarian Maoist vision that the Party leaders preached to them.

Besides political indoctrination and politicization, the CPK leadership adapted Maoism to contemporary norms in the same way that Mao “Sinified” Marxism: it infused Maoism with the personal charisma of the Paris Group and couched a Maoist vision in Cambodian peculiarities. The central pillar of Cambodian Maoism was the notion of the Party as the *Angkar*. As Sarin recalled, the CPK referred to itself as the “revolutionary organization,” or the “Organization (*Angkar*)” as early as March 1971, using it to play down Party leadership of the revolution to stress collective involvement (Sarin, 1973, p. 56). Hinton describes *Angkar* as constituting a CPK “ideological palimpsest linking high-modernist thought, communist ideology, and local understandings to idealize a new potent center” (2005, pp. 126, 127). Indeed, the term *Angkar* itself held resonating significance:

Angkar ... [means] “organization” but includes an array of connotations not captured by the English word. *Angkar* is derived from the Pali term *anga*, meaning “a constituent part of the body, a limb, member,” and proximately from the Khmer term [អង្គការ], which has the primary meaning of “body, structure, physique; limb of the body” but is also used to refer to “*mana*-filled” objects such as monks, royalty, religious statuary, or Siva lingas... Thus *Angkar* can be properly glossed as “the organization,” but it also connotes a structure that orders society, a part-whole relation... and an organic entity that is infused with power. (Hinton, 2005, p. 1314)

Whether or not peasants responded to the notion of a benevolent organization because of these links, the Party made its intentions clear. At the center of the powerful, human will-driven Party machine would be the

Angkar, which cared for all, as a national *pater familias*. As Party slogans reveal, it was true that the CPK leadership “sold” itself as such: អង្គការជាមតាបិតារបស់មារកុមារិនិងយុវជនយុវនារី (“The *Angkar* is the mother and father of all young children, as well as all adolescent boys and girls”) and អង្គការថ្មីនាមបងប្អូនពួកម៉ែ (“The *Angkar* tenderly looks after you all, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers) lend credence to this self-perception (Locard, 2005, pp. 107-108).

Once the Communists took Phnom Penh in 1975, Democratic Kampuchea, as the country would become, was to be governed as one big cooperative or mutual work team, which Yuon, Samphan, and Nim proposed (in lesser terms) in their dissertations. The whole country, in fact, was to be state-centric so that it could cast off the shackles of foreign exploitation. As Sary described during the resistance, the prices of goods “are set according to the principle that business transactions should benefit the population, the resistance, and the traders who must not seek exorbitant profits at the expense of others. To facilitate price control, we have been extending the network of supply and marketing cooperatives. All these measures have made it possible to stabilize the prices of commodities.” (Sary, “Cambodia 1972”, 10). Unproductive industries would not remain; only rice and water, the Cambodian lifeblood that coursed through the veins from its beating heart, the Mekong River Delta. Beneath the glossy veneer of the all-loving *Angkar* was something truly insidious: the Party claimed omnipresence and omniscience as a display of its awesome might. Indeed, Michel Foucault (1977, p.173) notes that the “perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything.” Although the Party assumed a faceless character when it took power, it would supervise everything and exercise its disciplinary power by way of total invisibility. This was the motivation from its terrifying slogans អង្គការភ្នែកម្ភនាស់ (“The *Angkar* has [the many] eyes of the pineapple”) and អង្គការដឹងប្រវត្តិរូបមិត្តអស់ហើយ! (Locard, pp. 112-113).³⁵ Though some recognized Khieu Samphan and his colleagues Hou Yuon and Hu Nim, by the 1970s no one in the country could identify the CPK leader since it ruled collectively and in secrecy. Yet its omnipresence, as it displayed through the total supervision of its people, augmented the Party’s central authority (Tyner, 2008, p. 154). Through this combination of the CPK leadership’s personal charisma, contemporary norms, and Maoist analyses from the intellectual thrust’s dissertations, the Party portrayed itself as peasant visionaries despite its leadership’s elite origins. Upon penetrating into rural society, the Paris Group turned the tides on Lon Nol and captured

35. “Comrades, the *Angkar* already knows your entire biography!”

Phnom Penh, applying once again useful tenets of Maoism's ideological system (people's war and New Democracy).

V. Conclusion.

As this essay has endeavored to show, radical intellectuals such as Guzmán (Perú) and Sar (Cambodia) who became Maoists were networked individuals within a situated thinking, who responded to crises such as post-independence underdevelopment and political corruption, capitalist imperialism, and urban/rural socioeconomic disequilibria by taking a Maoist turn. The reception of Maoism by these Communist Parties' intellectual thrust, moreover, led to its transformation into a variant that was congruent with contemporary norms and conditions. As textual exegesis and analyses of the political practices of these Maoists reveal, this reception was *dialectical* instead of genuflection. These radical intellectuals *spoke back*, revivifying, and investing Maoism with new signification, without abandoning the universality of the original theory (its Russian or its Chinese accretions), which stood as a global model for waging national revolution and socialist transformation.³⁶ In this way, this empirical study has sought to contribute to a better understanding of radical thought.

Maoist precepts, for one reason or another, resonated among *some* groups who supported the Shining Path, a Party that sought to reverse negative historical trends in semi-feudal and semi-colonial Perú. The Shining Path domesticated Maoist principles by combining them with what it regarded as Peru's particular cultural forms. It also appropriated Mariátegui's notion of *indigenismo* to consolidate further support from Quechua peoples,

36. On this point, I agree with Arif Dirlik and Nick Knight. Dirlik argues that Mao's Marxism is at once locally Chinese and universally Marxist: "Mao did not reduce Marxism to a Chinese version or view China merely as another illustration of universal Marxist principles. His exposition of the relationship is at once metonymic (Chinese Revolution reduced to aspect or function of Marxism in general) and synecdochic (intrinsic relationship of shared qualities). The result was a conception of the relationship that insisted on China's *difference* and yet represented Chinese Marxism as an embodiment of Marxism." Arif Dirlik, *Marxism in the Chinese Revolution* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, pp. 97-100). Nick Knight, meanwhile, asserts that Mao's "'Sinification of Marxism' was an attempt to discover a formula by which the universal theory of Marxism could be applied in a particular national context *without abandoning the universality of that theory.*" Nick Knight, *Rethinking Mao: Explorations in Mao Zedong Thought*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, 199). See also Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. (University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 190-192; and Hans Van de Ven, "War, Cosmopolitanism, and Authority: Mao from 1937 to 1956," in *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, 96). Marxist features that remained *in toto* include the materialist concept of history (conflict between social classes), critique of capitalism's exploitation of the urban proletariat, and the theory of a proletarian revolution.

and gained a enough strong peasant following in its millenarian struggle against the Peruvian government. The Shining Path succeeded at least marginally in extolling the importance of Andean culture and symbolism, promoting the advancement of indigenous rights, and tracing threads between the present struggle and past Peruvian attempts to end the unjust oppression of the Peruvian people. Contemporary scholars may fall into a temporal trap by merely foregrounding the fact that the Peruvian Maoists resorted to terrorism, cocaine trafficking, and extreme violence in their waning years of resistance. Yet the Shining Path presented a genuine challenge to the crooked Peruvian Government and made concerted efforts to improve the indigenous peoples' and peasants' standards of living, however ill-fated and ultimately unsuccessful such efforts were in the end.

Sar's 1966 return from China, meanwhile, coincided with the Paris Group's break with Sihanouk, and soon, they combined to form the ideological basis of the CPK's armed struggle. His conversion to Maoism signaled the beginning of his transformation from failed student to "Brother Number One," a name that he held before his 1977 "big reveal" that the *Angkar* was in fact the CPK, and he was its mysterious (and insidious) leader. But before he and his Paris cohort went down in infamy as genocidal leaders of a brutal human experiment, they sought actively to find a method to liberate their motherland from exploitation and used it (Maoism) to identify problems and provide solutions. The Party's Central Committee, as we have seen, had tremendous acumen when it came to peasant grievances since its membership contained those who had experienced that life before. Sar, though by no means one who experienced duress during his upbringing, was nevertheless a charismatic orator who had proven his worth on the revolutionary front. The Party's realization of its Maoist vision after 17 April 1975—the day that they captured Phnom Penh—was sadly the beginning of a four years project that would set the already downtrodden country back several decades, and cost nearly a third of its people their lives.

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