

# **Notes on People's War in Southeast Asia**

## **Anti-revisionist struggle and cultural revolution: Consequence to the Communist Party of the Philippines**

### **Validity and relevance of the October Revolution in response to the challenges of the 21st century**

by Jose Maria Sison



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June 27, 2007

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# Notes on People's War in Southeast Asia

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## Introduction

The subject of people's war in Southeast Asia is quite large. It would take at least a book to answer many of your possible questions. In a short discourse, I can only try to give you an outline of the subject, some important facts and ideas. Of course, I do so from my viewpoint. Thus, I prefer to describe my contribution as "notes" to signal that there is plenty of room for discussion.

Let me present to you the armed struggles led by communist parties in Southeast Asia before, during and immediately after World War II, focus on the people's war when Southeast Asia developed into the storm center of the world proletarian revolution from 1960 to 1975, evaluate the post-Mao China policy against people's war in the region, describe the people's war in the Philippines and explore the prospects of people's war in Southeast Asia.

Arranged chronologically according to their order of establishment were the following communist parties that led armed struggles at one time or another in Southeast Asia:

1. Communist Party of Indonesia (organized as the Communist Association of the Indies in 1920 under the auspices of the Communist International and renamed Communist Party of Indonesia in 1924)
2. Communist Party of the Philippines (Communist Party of the Philippine Islands in 1930, the Communist Party of the Philippines as merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties in 1938 and the Communist of the Party of the Philippines as reestablished in 1968)

3. Communist Party of Vietnam (Communist Party of Indochina in 1930, Vietnam Workers' Party in 1951 and Communist Party of Vietnam in 1976),
4. Malayan Communist Party (1930),
5. Burmese Communist Party (1939)
6. Communist Party of Thailand (Communist Party of Siam in 1942)
7. Party of Democratic Kampuchea (Kampuchea People's Revolutionary Party in 1951, Cambodian Communist Party in 1960 and Party of Democratic Kampuchea in 1981)
8. Lao People's Revolutionary Party (Lao People's Party in 1955 and Lao People's Revolutionary Party in 1975)
9. North Kalimantan Communist Party (1971)

### **1. Before World War II, 1926 to 1941**

Under the auspices of the Third Communist International (Comintern), communist parties were established in Southeast Asia before World War II. The earliest to be established was the Communist Party of the East Indies in 1920. It had the distinction of being the first communist party in the whole of Asia. It led an armed uprising for national liberation against Dutch colonialism in 1926, the first armed struggle in the region led by a communist party. The armed uprising was brutally suppressed by the Dutch colonialists but gave the Communist Party of Indonesia the highest prestige as the fighter for the national liberation of the Indonesian people.

Under the shadow of the Great Depression and upon the intensified work of the Comintern, the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands, the Communist Party of Indochina and the Communist Party of Malaya were organized in quick succession in 1930. The Vietnamese communists launched in 1930 and 1940 uprisings against French colonial rule. Both failed but raised the prestige of the communists as fighters for national and social liberation. The Communist Party of the Philippine Islands was suppressed by the US colonial authorities a few months after its founding. The exile and imprisonment of the principal leaders served to pressure the legal cadres to stay within the bounds of legalism with regard to the questions of national liberation and agrarian revolution.

The peasant masses were severely exploited in these countries. Thus, there were spontaneous peasant uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s in Southeast Asia. But in general the communist parties were not able to systematically arouse, organize and mobilize the peasants for the purpose of waging a protracted people's war against colonialism and feudalism through the encirclement of the cities from the countryside until the accumulation of armed strength made possible the seizure of political power in the cities.

The main thrust of the political work of the communist parties in the 1930s was to oppose the Western colonial powers and seek national liberation through all forms of struggle. Like the Filipino, Indonesian and Indochinese communists against US, Dutch and French colonialism respectively, the Malayan and Burmese communists were so focused on opposing British colonialism that it took sometime for them to accept entirely the decision of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935 to focus the revolutionary struggle against the fascism of Germany, Italy and Japan and develop the popular front with forces associated with the Western colonial powers but were opposed to fascism.

The Southeast Asian communist parties gradually took the anti-fascist position and more quickly after Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937. However, in the case of the newly-established Communist Party of Burma, principal party leaders Thakin Aung San went to Japan in 1939 for military training against British colonialism and came back to form the Burmese National Army. Japanese fascism had been using the slogans of nationalism and Asian economic co-prosperity sphere to oppose the Western colonial powers in Southeast Asia.

## **2. In the Course of World War II, 1941 to 1945**

Immediately following its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Japan invaded the Southeast Asian countries. The communist parties of Southeast Asia exposed the phenomenon of fascism and the inter-imperialist war as the result of the rotten character and crisis of the world capitalist system, called for the national unity of all anti-fascist forces and the building of the people's armies and other revolutionary forces against Japan.

The inter-imperialist war created the excellent conditions for

the communist parties and the people to build their revolutionary strength in fighting the Japanese invasion and occupation. The communist parties organized people's armies against Japan mainly among the peasant masses, engaged in land reform and built organs of political power in Indochina, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya and Burma.

The Communist Party of Indochina had organized the Revolutionary League for the Independence of Vietnam (Viet Minh) since 1941 to unite the communist and other anti-fascist forces to engage in guerilla warfare against the Japanese invaders and occupiers. It succeeded in building a powerful people's army based in the countryside and in building organs of political power and mass organizations. Ultimately, it defeated the Japanese aggressors, launched the uprising of August 1945 to seize political power, proclaim the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and suppress the pro-Japanese collaborators and made preparations to fight the plan of the French colonialists to reconquer Vietnam in 1946 and thus to ignite the First Indochina War.

The Communist Party of Indonesia was able to build guerrilla forces during the resistance against Japan and an alliance of the left wing and youth section of the Indonesian Socialist Party. These were the most reliable forces for upholding the proclamation of national independence by Sukarno in August 1945, frustrating the British military intervention and continued use of Japanese military units and fighting the return of Dutch colonialism to Indonesia. The US also began to intervene in Indonesian affairs.

The merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties in the Philippines organized the People's Army Against Japan

(Hukbalahap) in 1942, independently of the US Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFPE).

Despite Right opportunist errors in strategy, it was able to build units of the





people's army and organs of political power and carry out land reform. But it overconcentrated in only one region close to the national capital region and was unable to expand the revolutionary movement on a nationwide scale.

US imperialism took tremendous special efforts to reconquer the Philippines as a colony because of its strategic importance in the US counteroffensive against Japan and the US plan to impose its hegemony over the whole of Southeast Asia even at the expense of its imperialist allies. As early as September 1943 the US had started its bombing operations in the Philippines to destroy Japanese forces and to prepare for massive US troop landings in 1944.

Right opportunism persisted in undermining the merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties because of the leadership's decision to welcome the return of the US imperialist military forces and the puppet Commonwealth government. Subsequently, the Browderite line of peace and democracy blew in from the Communist Party of the USA, which had had a long relationship with the merger party.

The Malayan Communist Party built the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army and cooperated with British military forces in fighting against the Japanese occupation. But it maintained its initiative and independence. It demanded the independence of Malaya from British colonialism upon the defeat of Japan, thus incurring the hostility of British imperialism which was determined to recolonize Malaya and secure British interests in Southeast Asia.

The Burmese Communist Party took a major role in organizing the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) to fight the Japanese occupation which began in 1941-42. The AFPFL cooperated with the British military forces to expel the Japanese in 1945. Later on, it came under the control of military officers who increasingly became anti-communist, chauvinist and militarist. The Burmese Communist Party and the national minorities resisted the military regime.

### **3. Aftermath of World War II, 1946 to 1959**

After proclaiming the independence of Vietnam in 1945, the Viet Minh formed the National Assembly in January 1946. The French government recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a free state of the French Union in March 1946 but

declared war against it in November of the same year and began the First Indochina War. It set up the puppet government of Bao Dai in Saigon in 1948. The people's army of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam strengthened its bases in northern Vietnam and gained support from the victorious Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

In 1951 the Indochinese Communist Party decided to divide into three parties in to order let them focus on the problems in their respective countries. The kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos were recognized by France as "independent states" of the French Union in 1953. In the name of the Cold War, the US started to give substantial political and financial support to the French war effort in 1949 and at the same time increased its influence among prospective Vietnamese puppets. The Vietnamese people's army defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 on the eve of the Geneva Conference.

The Geneva Conference of 1954 agreed to divide Vietnam into North and South temporarily and to reunite it after elections in 1956. But the US-supported Ngo Dinh Diem regime that had deposed the Bao Dai regime in 1955 refused to hold elections. Following orders from the US, it declared South Vietnam a republic. A Filipino lawyer asset of the US Central Intelligence Agency drafted the constitution of the phoney republic.

The Ngo regime unleashed a reign of terror against the Viet Minh, the people and all opposition forces, including patriotic religious organizations. Local revolts occurred in 1957. A full scale civil war developed in 1959. This began the Second Indochina War, in which the US increased its military intervention until this became a full-scale war of aggression.

Following the declaration of Indonesian national independence in 1945, Indonesian president Sukarno proceeded to call for national unity to fight against the British military forces and thereafter the Dutch military forces who sought to reconquer Indonesia. At first, he relied mainly on the disciplined and battle-tested guerrilla forces of the Communist Party of Indonesia and on the left-wing and youth section of the Partai Sosialis Indonesia. But he and his vice president Hatta increasingly relied on the pro-US and pro-Western military officers, including those who had served in the Japanese occupation army. The communists were massacred in Madiun in 1948 to make way for the neocolonial compromise in the Round Table Conference

Agreement.

Challenged by the US and pro-US forces and ultra-reactionary forces in Indonesia represented by Hatta and the right wing forces of the Masjumi and Socialist Party, Sukarno sought once more the alliance of the Communist Party of Indonesia in 1951. The Communist Party of Indonesia ordered its remaining armed units to disband and appeared to thrive politically by pursuing the peaceful and parliamentary road of struggle and by keeping an anti-imperialist alliance with Sukarno and his nationalist following.

It was able to increase its party membership, rapidly build large mass organizations and won 16.4 per cent of the votes in the 1955 elections. It was able to stand up against the US military intervention and armed rebellions of the pro-US ultra-reactionary forces in 1958. In this connection, it was able to build militia units and gain followers and influence within the military and police of the Sukarno government. But subsequently, it agreed to relinquish leadership over its armed units and submit them for integration in the Indonesian army. The Communist Party of Indonesia became bound to the Right opportunist and revisionist line of legalism and parliamentarism and wishing to enlarge the "pro-people aspect" of the Indonesian semi-colonial state of the big compradors and landlords.

The old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties pushed for and welcomed the grant of nominal national independence to the Philippines by the US in 1946. It agreed with the reactionary authorities to demobilize the people's army and surrender its arms despite the rising brutal acts of the US and local reactionary forces against units of the people's army and the peasants who had undertaken land reform during the Japanese occupation. It was heavily influenced by the Browderite line of peace and democracy. It formed the Democratic Alliance to compete in the electoral struggle.

The Democratic Alliance won enough seats in Congress in 1946 to prevent the passage of an amendment in the 1935 Constitution for the purpose of allowing US corporations and citizens to have rights at par with the Filipinos in exploiting Philippine natural resources and operating public utilities. The puppet government ousted from Congress the progressive members on false charges of electoral fraud and terrorism. Moreover, the brutal attacks on the people in the revolutionary areas esca-

lated. Thus, the ground was laid for a decision of the old merger party in 1948 to start revolutionary armed struggle. But only in the latter half of 1950 was the people's army able to launch some relatively large offensives on a wide scale along the Sierra Madre mountain range.

The "Left" opportunist line of seeking to win complete victory in two years' time without painstaking mass work, without land reform and without building the people's army in stages but relying on the growth of the spontaneous uprising of the people due to the severe crisis of the system and violent contradictions among the reactionaries proved disastrous. The enemy was able to launch a sustained counter-attack against the forest-based camps of the people's army and capture most of the city-based principal leaders in 1950-52. Since then, the old merger party swung back to Right opportunism, including the orders to liquidate the people's army in 1955 and the party in 1957, and caused the party to become moribund, until efforts were made to revive it from 1959 onwards.

The British colonialists legalized the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army but banned it in 1948 and declared a state of emergency in order to suppress it. Peace talks between the Malayan communist leaders and the chief ministers of Malaya and Singapore broke down as the latter officials demanded the dissolution of the Malayan Communist Party. The state of emergency was ended in 1960 after the authorities estimated that they had virtually crushed the people's army. But in fact this continued to fight from a relatively secure area along the Thailand-Malaya border area.

After being expelled from the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League in 1946, the Burmese Communist Party launched an armed revolution in 1948. It operated mainly in Central Burma and the in the Arakan mountains and Irrawaddy delta. It engaged in alliances with the minority nationalities that were also waging armed struggle against the Burmese reactionary government. It engaged in peace negotiations withn this government in 1958 but these did not stop the people's war.

The people's armies led by communist parties in Southeast Asia stood their ground against the attempts of the old Western colonial powers to reconquer and reimpose their rule on their former colonies. The people's armies were also resolutely and vigorously against the attempts of the US to expand its hegemo-

ny. The resounding victories of China against the US-Guomindang tandem inspired the communist parties of Southeast Asia to engage in people's war. The US became more aggressive in carrying out the Cold War in Asia from 1948 onwards as well as in unleashing the wars of aggression against Korea in 1951-53 and in the next decade in Vietnam.

#### 4. People's Wars in Southeast Asia, 1960 to 1975

The communist and noncommunist forces in the armed struggle against the US-supported Ngo Dinh Diem regime united to form the South Vietnam National Liberation Front in 1960. In 1961 the US began to deploy large numbers of "advisors" in the South Vietnamese military and bureaucracy and in 1964 it began to launch military operations against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by land, sea and air.

The US war of aggression against the people of Vietnam became indubitably clear with the rapid deployment of hundreds of thousands of US troops and with large military operations from US military bases inside and outside of Vietnam. The Vietnamese communists and people were determined to carry out a war of national liberation against the US war of aggression through the strategy of protracted people's war.

At that time, the Vietnam Workers Party was close to the Communist Party of China under Comrade Mao

Zedong. It was disappointed that the



Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Khrushchov was hyping the general line of peaceful coexistence and the road of peaceful transition and was not interested in assisting the Vietnamese communists in people's war. It was only after the overthrow of Khrushchov that the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev extended support to the Vietnamese war of national liberation. Consequently, the Vietnam Workers' Party took a centrist position in the Sino-Soviet ideological debate.

The US escalated its military intervention through military advisors and military supplies to the level of a full-scale war of aggression involving hundreds of thousands of troops, huge US military bases and US fire bases all over South Vietnam. It engaged in all types of vicious military campaigns in South Vietnam and made frequent bombing raids on North Vietnam. The Vietnamese people intensified their resistance and inflicted heavy casualties on US and puppet troops on the ground, shot down thousands of US planes and destroyed convoys of enemy vehicles.

The US instigated the military coup in Cambodia against Sihanouk by Lon Nol in 1970 in the vain hope of disrupting and preventing the passage of supplies for the South Vietnam National Liberation Front through either the so-called Ho Chi Minh trail or ports of Cambodia. Earlier in 1968 the Communist Party of Kampuchea had launched the armed revolution against the Sihanouk government. But the overthrow of Sihanouk by Lon Nol brought about the conditions for the alliance between the Communist Party of Kampuchea and the forces of Sihanouk with the support of the Communist Party of China.

The people's war led by the Communist Party of Cambodia advanced very rapidly. The alliance of patriotic forces formed the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea. The Vietnamese, Kampuchean and Laotian revolutionary parties and peoples united in waging people's war against US imperialism and its puppet forces. Their intensified people's wars compelled the US to negotiate towards the Paris Peace Accord of 1973 and paved the way for the total victories of their revolutionary struggle for national liberation against US imperialism.

From 1960 onward, the calls for people's war in Southeast Asia resounded against the continuing aggressiveness of the US in expanding its hegemony. In the growing Sino-Soviet ideological debate the revisionist line of Khrushchov did not dull but sharpened the resolve of the communist parties to wage armed revolution. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China further sharpened such resolve and the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Chairman Mao was enthusiastic in sup-

porting the communist parties that decided to wage people's war in Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Kalimantan Utara and the Philippines. All these had long been inspired by the victories of the Chinese people in the new democratic and socialist revolutions and in making a great breach on the imperialist front in the East.

Even the Communist Party of Indonesia, which had become the biggest communist party among those in nonsocialist states by pursuing the line of peaceful and legal struggle from 1951 to 1965, began from 1963 onwards to consider the necessity of armed revolution against armed counterrevolution. It was then categorically expressing support for the Marxist-Leninist line of the Chinese Communist Party in the ideological debate against the line of modern revisionism espoused by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Khrushchov. But it also wanted to retain friendly relations with the Soviet party.

It intended to "prepare" for the armed struggle by waging the campaign of rural investigation and intensified peasant organizing, the campaign to nationalize foreign enterprises and the "crush Malaysia" campaign. It called on the Sukarno government for arming the people, especially the militia. But it remained unclear on whether to wage armed struggle against the semi-colonial state and was vacillating about what form of armed revolution it would undertake, even as the US, British and Dutch imperialists and their puppets headed by Suharto were feverishly preparing to massacre the Indonesian communists, their mass following and sympathizers in 1965-66.

The debacle of the Indonesian communists was in sharp contrast to the growing victories and ultimate victory of the Indochinese communists against US imperialism in the period of 1965 to 1975. But the communists of Indonesia were still expected to fight back and recover their debacle through people's war. However, they did not succeed in their initial efforts at people's war in Blitar and Kalimantan in 1967 and 1968. Their further defeat allowed the US, British, Dutch and Japanese imperialists to take advantage of the oil and other natural resources of Indonesia. The North Kalimantan Communist Party was founded only in 1971 and had some armed units. It was unable to sustain and develop its revolutionary armed struggle.

Since 1961, the Communist Party of Thailand had taken a strong Marxist-Leninist position in the Sino-Soviet ideological

debate and decided to adopt the strategic line of protracted people's war. It started guerrilla warfare in 1965 in the northeastern provinces of Thailand along the border with Laos, where they won the support of the Meo tribesmen, and subsequently spread to the northern provinces and to the extreme south, where the Malayan Communist Party and people's army were based. The Thai People's Liberation Army received considerable support after 1970 from China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It was able to carry out major offensives, including raids on US air force bomber bases in Thailand.

In the early 1960s the Burmese Communist Party also took a strong Marxist-Leninist position in the Sino-Soviet ideological debate. In 1967 the Communist Party of China openly declared its support for the Burmese communists and their people's war. The Burmese Communist Party transferred its headquarters to the Chinese border area and received substantial military assistance from China. However, in 1967-68, it mishandled a rectification movement and committed grave errors which undermined the revolutionary integrity, strength and prestige of the party in the short and long term.

As early as 1959 the proletarian revolutionaries in the Philippines were already desirous of resuming the armed revolution along the general line of the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. They were also enlightened by the international debate between the Marxist-Leninists and modern revisionists in

the early 1960s and inspired by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 onwards. But they were also desirous of summing up and analyzing the concrete conditions and revolutionary experience in the Philippines, rectifying errors and rebuilding the rev-





olutionary party of the proletariat and the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal mass movement for a certain period of time before launching the people's war.

The rectification movement under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought began in 1967. The Communist Party of the Philippines was reestablished on December 26, 1968 and in a few months' time founded the New People's Army on March 29, 1969. The enemy tried to nip the armed revolutionary movement in the bud from 1969 to 1971, pitting a full division against a few squads of the NPA, but failed. Then in 1972 the Marcos regime began to impose a fourteen-year fascist dictatorship on the Filipino people. The revolutionary forces and people grew even stronger through people's war.

The period of 1960 to 1975 may be described as the period when the whole of Southeast Asia was the focus of the storm of the world proletarian revolution through people's war and the eye of the storm was in Vietnam and then the whole of Indochina, when the people's war completely triumphed in 1975. In view of this great victory, there were bright hopes for the peoples of Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines to persevere in people's war and win their own great victories.

## **5. Post-Mao Policy of China, 1976 to the present**

In the last five years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1971-1976, the Rightist and Centrists in the Communist Party of China had gained so much ground in weakening the Left, in devaluing the need for people's war in Southeast Asia, in giving priority to developing rapprochement with the US under the guise of opposing the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, after the demise of Comrade Mao Zedong, the alliance of Centrists and Rightists paved the way for a counter-revolutionary coup and the restoration of capitalism, under the slogans of "reforms" (capitalist-oriented reforms), "opening up to the world" (integration into the world capitalist system) and "promoting peace, stability and economic development in the region" (including the withdrawal of support from the Southeast Asian communist parties, the dissolution of Central Committee delegations of fraternal parties in China and wherever possible the liquidation of people's war).

What obfuscated China's policy of liquidating people's war in

Southeast Asia was its conspicuous support for Democratic Kampuchea from 1975 onwards and in the entire duration of the Third Indochina War from 1979 onwards, its opposition to the invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnam and its counter-invasion of Vietnam also in 1979 and its support for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CDGK) based on the three-way alliance of the Party for Democratic Kampuchea (the erstwhile Communist Party of Kampuchea), the Sihanouk forces and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front led by Son Sann in 1982, extending up to 1991.

But the Party of Democratic Kampuchea was put in the position of being cornered by its two major allies in the coalition government. It was supported by China but it was also required to collaborate with the US and Thai governments to allow all allies in the coalition government to have bases along the Thai border and free passage of personnel and materiel to and from Kampuchea across Thailand. Democratic Kampuchea retained the UN seat of Kampuchea until 1982. Then this was passed on to the CGDK until 1993.

The Party of Democratic Kampuchea became bound to agreements in 1991 under the auspices of the UN to liquidate the people's war and attain national reconciliation among all political forces through elections in the 1993 under the supervision of the UN peacekeeping mission. The Party of Democratic Kampuchea was outmaneuvered by the other political forces, including its allies in the CGDK, and by the US, Chinese and Thai governments. It backed out of the agreements and resumed the people's war after realizing that it had been outmaneuvered. But by then, it had become isolated and deprived of the support of its former foreign supporters. The Party of Democratic Kampuchea went into a process of rapid disintegration from 1996 to 1998.

The war between Vietnam and Kampuchea disrupted the previous important relations and arrangements of the Communist Party of Thailand with the Communist Party of Kampuchea and the People's Revolutionary Party of Laos. China also used its support for the Party of Democratic Kampuchea and its allies in the coalition government to advise the Communist Party of Thailand to refrain from revolutionary radio broadcasts against the Thai government and finally to close down its Yunnan-based radio broadcasting station.

In connection with its policy of peace, stability and econom-

ic development and policy of supporting the resistance in Kampuchea, the Chinese authorities had advised, pressured and induced the Communist Party of Malaya to make a peace agreement with both the governments of Malaysia and Thailand since the early 1980s. The peace agreement was done in 1989. Subsequently, the Malayan Communist Party liquidated itself, surrendered its arms to the Thai authorities and converted the former revolutionary base at the Thai-Malaysian border into a tourist spot.

There are reports that upon Deng Xiaoping's return to power, the Chinese authorities prevented the leaders of the communist parties of Thailand and Burma from promptly communicating and meeting with their forces across the border. It may be true that these parties suffered setbacks due to external factors. But in the first place there are internal factors to consider. A communist party has to develop on its initiative and be self-reliant. Otherwise it becomes dependent on another party and becomes vulnerable to dictation from the outside.

The leadership of the Communist Party of Thailand based in Northeast Thailand was predominantly Chinese and failed to expand towards the non-Chinese communities in the plains and to handle correctly the thousands of Thai students who had joined the revolution after the military coup of 1976. The Thai government succeeded in attracting back these students with an amnesty proclamation in 1982. From that time on, it was able to make military advances on the armed base of the people's army and to arrest cadres of the communist party in urban and rural areas. There is no open manifestation of the current existence and activities of the Communist Party of Thailand.

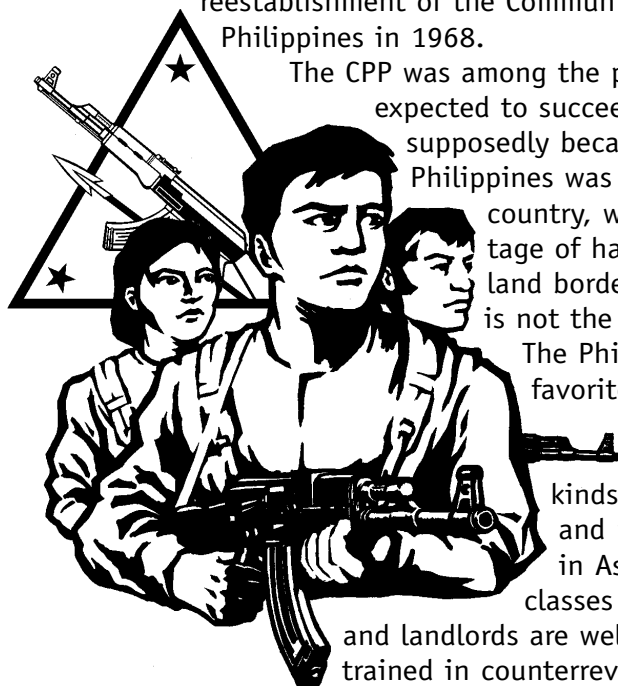
Nearly all members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Burma were outside of Burma. Unable to cross the border from China, they could not have a handle on the people's army which increasingly came under the control of localist commanders. But the Communist Party of Burma still shows some signs of life, such as a website and statements by a prominent communist general who was one of the major founders of the Burmese National Army but who joined the Burmese Communist Party. The Burmese military regime had rebuffed previous proposals of the Burmese Communist Party to retain its armed units and some territory in exchange for a truce.

## 6. Perseverance and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines

By virtue of its own history and circumstances, the Communist Party of the Philippines could be reestablished in 1968 and could resume the revolutionary armed struggle in 1969. A series of major Right and "Left" opportunist errors had afflicted the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties and needed to be rectified in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

The Right opportunist line of reducing the units of the people's army to small teams of three to five members and refraining from tactical offensives from 1942 to 1943 and welcoming the return of the US from 1943 to 1945 limited the development of the people's army in the course of World War II and subsequently derailed the revolutionary mass movement towards legalism from 1946 to 1948. It shifted to "Left" opportunism when the party decided in 1948 to wage armed struggle and win in two year's time, without developing the people's army in stages, implementing land reform and carrying out painstaking mass work. After the arrest of the principal cadres in 1950, Right opportunism came back with a vengeance and continued until the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968.

The CPP was among the parties least expected to succeed in people's war, supposedly because the Philippines was an archipelagic country, without the advantage of having a common land border with China. That is not the only disadvantage. The Philippines is the favorite secure base from which US imperialism launches all kinds of intervention and military aggression in Asia. The ruling classes of big comprador and landlords are well schooled and trained in counterrevolution. Moreover,



the US-Marcos regime imposed a 14-year long fascist dictatorship on the people. But it failed to destroy the CPP and the revolutionary movement. Instead, these grew from small to big and from weak to strong.

The CPP has proven that under correct leadership it can preserve and develop the people's army and other revolutionary forces, such as the organs of political power and the mass organizations. It has generated powerful mass movements in the economic, social, political and cultural fields for the benefit of the people along the line of national democratic revolution. The people's army has been waging people's war for more than 38 years, far longer than it took China to win the people's democratic revolution. The CPP has learned much from the teachings of Comrade Mao about protracted people's war and has successfully applied these on the concrete conditions of the Philippines.

But there are those who might say that the people's war has been extremely protracted in the Philippines. If this is said to demoralize the people and the revolutionary forces, the riposte is: how much more successful at social revolution or basic reforms are those who have engaged mainly or solely in legal and electoral struggle or those who have been wishing for a quick victory in armed struggle?

The CPP has accumulated enough revolutionary experience and knowledge to respond to the challenge of accelerating the advance of the people's democratic revolution. In this connection, it must study well and analyze the concrete conditions of the Philippines. At the same time, it must consider how people's war can resurge in Southeast Asia and in other global regions under the present crisis conditions of the world capitalist system.

## **7. Prospects of People's War in Southeast Asia**

There are some bright prospects, especially in the objective conditions, for the resurgence of people's war in Southeast Asia. The world capitalist system is in an increasingly severe economic and financial crisis. Southeast Asia has never fully recovered from the crisis of 1997. This has been covered up merely by new lethal doses of foreign borrowing to cover trade and budgetary deficits. The people of Southeast Asia suffer from intensifying exploitation and oppression. They are therefore being driven to wage resistance.

The policy of "neoliberal globalization" has accelerated as never before the concentration and centralization of productive and finance capital in the hands of a few imperialist powers. The adoption of higher technology has only served to maximize imperialist profit-taking and step up the accumulation of constant capital and reduction of variable capital for wages. After every round in the crisis of overproduction, unemployment rises and incomes of the working people sink, thus the market is further constricted.

The economic and financial crisis of the world capitalist system has become so grave and deep that it is leading to acute political crisis and pushing the monopoly bourgeoisie to step up military production, whip up war hysteria, chauvinism, racism and fascism on a global scale and unleash wars of aggression under the pretext of a permanent and preemptive global war of terror. Since 9/11, US imperialism has been drumming up the line that the Philippines and the adjoining countries with large oil resources and Muslim population constitute the "second front" in the "global war on terror".

The restoration of capitalism in the former socialist countries has resulted in the increase of imperialist powers competing for economic territory (sources of oil and other natural resources, markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence) and struggling for a redivision of the world. The world cannot accommodate too many imperialist powers. As the US and the NATO preoccupy themselves and are overextended in Iraq and Afghanistan, their attention to other parts of the world is reduced or their spurts of attention are increasingly rebuffed by the people and various forces.

The basic contradictions in the world are intensifying, those between the imperialist powers and the oppressed peoples, those among the imperialist powers and those between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the imperialist countries. Driven by greed for oil, the US imperialists insist on staying in Iraq and are incurring significant losses. Elsewhere in the world, especially in South Asia, there is high probability of widespread people's war. We can also look forward to the emergence of revolutionary forces in countries where the ever worsening conditions of oppression and exploitation drive the people to wage armed resistance.

In Southeast Asia, there is something precious to learn from

the experience of the Communist Party of the Philippines in preserving and developing the people's army and in waging people's war for more than 38 years. If protracted people's war is viable in a country like the Philippines, it should be even more viable in a country like Indonesia, with a bigger number of people suffering from semicolonial and semifeudal oppression and exploitation and with an archipelagic and rough terrain of a scale far larger than that of the Philippines.

Indonesia has the high potential of becoming a major field of people's war against the US and other imperialist powers that were behind the massacre of more than three million Indonesians and the 33 years of the military fascist dictatorship of Suharto. We are gratified to know that proletarian revolutionaries here are determined to pursue the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war and to grasp and realize such three magic weapons, as the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party, the people's army and the united front.

As the Communist Party of the Philippines was able to rise from the ashes of the 1950-52 defeat of its predecessor party and from the prolonged period of violent anti-communist reaction, so can other communist parties in Southeast Asia rise from defeats and setbacks through summing up and analysis of conditions and experience, through a rectification movement and through resolute and militant efforts to resume the revolutionary struggle.

In a country where the people have won the new democratic revolution through people's war and are carrying out socialist revolution and construction, modern revisionism can rear its ugly head in the bureaucracy and generate the line and policies for the restoration of capitalism. The genuine communists and the people can wage the ideological struggle and the cultural revolution to combat modern revisionism, prevent capitalist restoration and consolidate socialism. They can wage people's war if the modern revisionists succeed in overthrowing them. If they fail to do so, a later generation of communists will wage people's war under worse conditions of social retrogression.





# **Anti-revisionist struggle and cultural revolution: Consequence to the Communist Party of the Philippines**

**by Jose Maria Sison**

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and Lessons to the Working Class Movement  
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I wish to speak on the significance and relevance of the Marxist-Leninist struggle against modern revisionism since 1956 and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) since 1966. And I wish to deal with this large subject by examining the impact and consequences of the aforesaid historic events to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

May I declare at the outset that the resoluteness, militancy, resilience and victories of the CPP have been immeasurably inspired by the anti-revisionist struggle and the GPCR led by Comrade Mao. These have contributed to the strong foundation of the CPP, its invincibility and victories in the course of struggle in the last 38 years and its unwavering confidence in the resurgence of socialism and the ultimate victory of communism.

## **The Struggle Against Modern Revisionism**

In 1963 the Filipino revolutionaries began to sum up and analyze the historical experience of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (1930 to 1938) and the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist Parties (1938 to 1968). We sought to resume the armed revolution and to know why this had failed

previously.

We were guided by the Marxist-Leninist theory of state and revolution and we were certainly deeply influenced by the works of Comrade Mao on the new democratic revolution through people's war. Revolutionary storms were rapidly developing in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

At that time, the struggle between the Marxist-Leninist line and the line of modern revisionism had already broken out, mainly between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Communist Party of China (CPC). We the Filipino proletarian revolutionaries stood up for the Marxist-Leninist line, even as some of the key cadres in the old merger party insisted that the CPSU and the CPC were not in contradiction over fundamental revolutionary principles but were debating merely about methods of struggle.

Such cadres would later become well-defined as the Lava revisionist renegades in 1967. Having failed to rebuild the old merger party since it was crushed in the years of 1950 to 1952 and practically liquidated since 1957, they had no choice for a while but to have amicable relations with the proletarian revolutionaries who were leading the newly-formed branches of the old merger party, the major mass organizations and the resurgent anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and civil libertarian mass movement.

We the proletarian revolutionaries were determined to develop the mass movement in order to carry out the new democratic revolution through protracted people's war under the leadership of the working class party. We were strongly opposed to the Khrushchovite revisionist line of bourgeois populism ("party of the whole people" and "state of the whole people") and bourgeois pacifism ("peaceful transition", "peaceful competition" and "peaceful co-existence").

We held the position that Khrushchov had vilified and totally negated Stalin under the pretext of rejecting the "cult of personality" in order to attack Marxism-Leninism and socialism. We became aware of Comrade Mao's criticism in April 1956 of Khrushchov's anti-Stalin speech in February 1956 and the debate on the issues in the 1957 and 1960 Moscow meetings of communist and workers' parties. We eagerly studied the wide range of issues that emerged in the open debate between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the early 1960s.

We became aware of the decentralizing and confused reorganizations done in the Soviet party, state, economy and culture in order to subvert Marxism-Leninism and socialism. We saw as wrong Khrushchov's admiration for Titoite revisionism, which included rejection of land reform and central planning. We saw through the economism and opportunism in Khrushchov's promise of achieving communism in twenty years by changing the material and cultural foundation of Soviet society through bourgeois economic reforms.

We were indignant over Khrushchov's policies towards other countries. He cancelled all the agreements and blueprints of economic cooperation with China in retaliation for the anti-revisionist line of the CPC in the ideological debate. He refused to extend effective support to the preparations and efforts of the Vietnamese people to wage a war of national liberation against US imperialism and its puppets. He encouraged the revisionists in Eastern Europe to take power and change policies. He promoted the practice of neocolonialism in relations with the countries in Eastern Europe, and Asia.

As a result of obvious bunglings, Khrushchov was deposed and replaced by Brezhnev in 1964. Some of the old cadres who had believed that the debate between the CPSU and the CPC was only about methods of struggle thought that the ascendance of Brezhnev meant a consolidation of the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the practice of socialist revolution and construction because



of the renewed Soviet revolutionary phrase-mongering and the recentralization of the ministries decentralized by Khrushchov.

We understood what Khrushchovism without Khrushchov meant. Brezhnev widened the revisionist breaches made by Khrushchov on the ideological, political and organizational line of the Soviet party and on the socialist state, economy and culture even as he recentralized the bureaucracy for the purpose of bureaucrat monopoly capitalism and strengthened the Soviet military for the purpose of big power politics and social imperialism.

What had started as the petty bourgeois social base (including degenerate sections of the bureaucracy and intelligentsia, the new kulaks and merchants) generated the big bureaucrat monopoly bourgeoisie and its retinue of criminal big bourgeois in the private sector who manipulated and stole from state enterprises and warehouses and who increased their role in domestic and foreign trade.

The summing-up and analysis of the history of the old merger party matured among the proletarian revolutionaries towards the end of 1965. Earlier the Executive Committee of the old merger had assigned this speaker to draft the general report for a new congress of the old merger party. I included the evaluation of the old merger party in terms of the Marxist-Leninist ideological line, the general political line of people's democratic revolution and the organizational line of democratic centralism.

The draft general report sparked a debate and a division in the old merger party between the proletarian revolutionaries or the Marxist-Leninists and the Lava revisionists. The issues involved mainly how the series of Lavaite leaders in the old merger party had caused one disaster after another, how they had been afflicted by subjectivism and opportunism, how they failed to develop the Party, the people's army and the united front as weapons of the revolution and how they neglected land reform, armed struggle and mass base building as integral components of the armed revolution.

The Marxist-Leninists completely broke away from the Lava revisionist renegade in April 1967. They issued a declaration on May 1, 1967 and announced the plan to reestablish the Communist Party of the Philippine (CPP). The Lava revisionists also issued their own declaration. The Marxist-Leninists launched what is now called the First Great Rectification Movement based

on the document, "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party. They also formulated a new Party Constitution and the Program for a People's Democratic Revolution in order to establish the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968, under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-MaoZedong Thought (or Maoism).

### **The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution**

The reestablishment of the CPP was benefited by the struggle of Marxist-Leninists against the Lava revisionist renegades and by the international struggle led by Comrade Mao against the modern revisionism centered in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it was benefited by Comrade Mao's theory and practice of the continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship, through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution begun in 1966, in order to combat revisionism, prevent the restoration of capitalism and consolidate socialism.

Of course, there was a big difference between reestablishing the Communist Party of the Philippines for the immediate purpose of leading the people's democratic revolution and the phenomenon of the GPCR in socialist China. But we the Marxist-Leninists in the Philippines deeply appreciated the GPCR as the



process of preventing the restoration of capitalism in socialist countries and we recognized the great benefit of acquiring foresight and confidence in the historical development of socialism, up to the threshold of communism.

We understood that Comrade Mao brought the theoretical and practical development of Marxism-Leninism to a new and higher level by putting forward the

theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship as the way to ensure the ultimate victory of communism. We had the advantage of sending delegations to China during the GPCR. We had the opportunity to observe the process and listen to the explanations.

Comrade Mao had learned from the earlier experience of the Soviet Union that one could err as Stalin did to declare prematurely the end of classes and class struggle, except the struggle between imperialism and the Soviet people, just because by legal and economic definition capitalists and landlords no longer existed in the Soviet Union. After Stalin, the Soviet revisionist party consistently proclaimed that the mission of the working class had been accomplished. The Chinese revisionists also declared that the class struggle was dying out.

Mao recognized the dangers and disastrous results of denying the existence of classes and class struggle in socialist society and presuming a short socialist transition from capitalism to communism. He stressed that class struggle is the key link and revolutionary politics must be in command. He pointed to the teachings of Lenin that socialism entails a whole historical epoch and that after its defeat in a country the bourgeoisie resists socialism more fiercely by ten-thousand fold, regroups and tries to recover strength in any social sphere or institution to which it can withdraw and keeps availing of the assistance and influence of the international bourgeoisie.

The danger of capitalist restoration comes not only from the remnants of the old bourgeoisie and landlords but from the political degeneration of revolutionary veterans as well as from the children of the workers and peasants who become well educated formally and rise up within the party, state, economy and culture but who become alienated from the working people and take on the petty bourgeois way of acting and behaving until they become full-fledged revisionists.

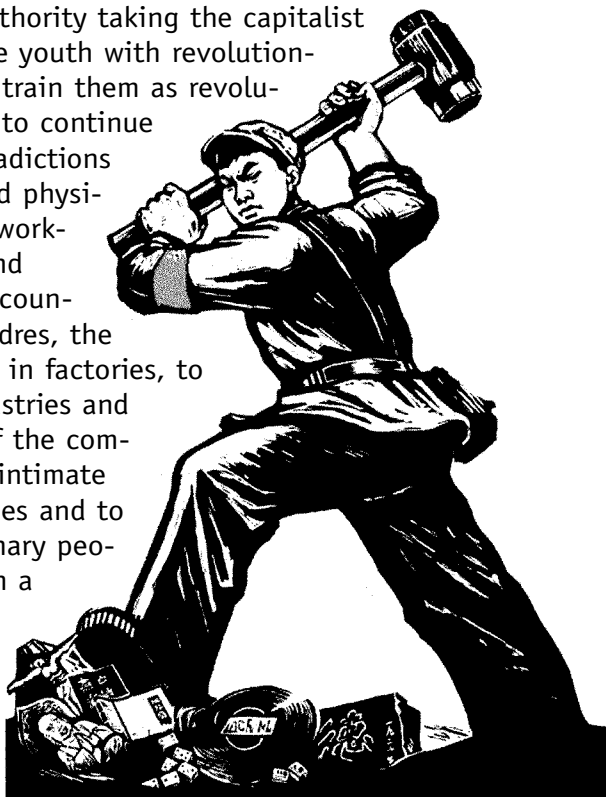
Having been the pioneer in socialist revolution and construction, the Soviet Union enjoyed great prestige and influence in China after the victory of the Chinese revolution. Quite a number of Chinese revolutionary leaders worshipped the Soviet model, even when this had become outdated, was inapplicable to Chinese conditions or was characterized by revisionism. Then after the 1949 victory of the Chinese revolution, many Chinese students and workers went to the Soviet Union for education and

training, exactly when revisionism was gaining ground and upon their return acquired key positions in the bureaucracy and the Party.

The theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship was impelled by the need to counter the phenomenon of Chinese revisionism that arose not only from Chinese conditions but also took inspiration from Soviet revisionism. Mao had to contend with the Chinese revisionists who used the CPC Eighth Party Congress to undercut the socialist line and who opposed and tried to derail the Great Leap Forward and then the Socialist Education Movement.

Mao put forward the theory and practice of continuing the revolution under proletarian dictatorship in order to revolutionize both the social base and the superstructure of Chinese socialism and ensure the leading position of the working class and its Party, to undertake the cultural revolution as the most extensive form of democracy ever experienced by humankind, to unite the entire Party, proletariat and people against the Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road, to provide the youth with revolutionary experience and train them as revolutionary successors, to continue resolving the contradictions between mental and physical work, between workers and peasants and between town and country, to unite the cadres, the masses and experts in factories, to build the rural industries and expand the scale of the communes, to develop intimate links with the masses and to build the revolutionary people's committees on a new basis.

Without the GPCR, the socialist line of Mao would have been reversed earlier by



the Chinese revisionists. But in carrying out the GPCR, Comrade Mao, the Marxist-Leninists and the entire Chinese people won resounding victories against the revisionists in the ten-year course of the GPCR from 1966 to 1976. The class struggle between the two sides continued to intensify and was not resolved completely. The revisionists were able to maneuver and fight, to make trouble and make a comeback. This explains why soon after the death of Mao the Marxist-Leninists lost power and the revisionists came to power through the combination of the Rightists and Centrists.

Certain errors and shortcomings in the course of the GPCR, enabled the revisionists to gain advantage and maneuver. Factional groupings and factional fighting arose and were at times confusing to the masses. In the course of the mass movement, due process was not rigorously respected and some people suffered persecution. At certain crucial junctures, the Left did not win over the Middle in order to isolate and defeat the Right. Thus, the Right could take advantage of ultra-Left attacks on the Middle. The centrists hardened and succeeded in intrigue at the expense of the Left and the Left split a number of times. With the help of the centrists, the Rightists gained ground and were restored to high offices as early as 1971.

In the Soviet experience, after the death of Stalin, the revisionists came to power after a series of splits among the successors loyal to Stalin from 1954 to 1956. For a long while, from 1956 to 1989, the revisionists pretended to improve on socialism by adopting capitalist reforms. It would only be in 1991 that they openly discarded the flag of the Communist Party, attack the name of Lenin and the entire legacy of Lenin and Stalin, legalize the accumulated capital in the hands of a few and accelerate the full-blown restoration of capitalism. Since then, Russia and other republics of the former Soviet have undergone unprecedented economic, social, political and cultural degradation. So have the former satellites of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe.

Up to the present, the Communist Party of China remains in power but since the 1976 coup it has completely departed from the revolutionary road under the leadership of Comrade Mao. It has flagrantly adopted and promoted capitalism since the unbridled re-commodification of Chinese labor power, the dismantling of the commune system and the opening to foreign direct



investments. Chinese state-owned industries have been dismantled in a big way in favor of private enterprises. The ownership of land is still formally public but in fact the land is made available on a widescale for capitalist profit.

The Chinese economy is extremely lopsided. The foreign-owned sweatshops proliferate in the eastern coast and private construction projects go on in the cities. But the underdevelopment and poverty of most parts of China have deepened and aggravated. Unemployment is rampant. Chinese in huge numbers have been laid off from the dissolved state-owned enterprises. Hundreds of millions of Chinese are migrant workers with extremely low wages and without rights. The peasant masses live under conditions similar to or worse than those before the victory of the revolution in 1949. China may be described as a neo-colonial adjunct of the economically far superior imperialist countries if one observes the increasing compradorization and refeudalization of the Chinese economy.

At the same time, there are those who describe China as an emerging imperialist country in certain respects and in certain degrees. Chinese monopoly capital, bureaucratic and private, even if increasingly foreign-controlled and big comprador in character, has a dominant position in the Chinese economy. Bank capital is merged with industrial capital to make finance capital to some extent, even as the banking system is overburdened with huge foreign loans as well as with bad industrial and commercial loans and is in the process of increasingly coming under the control of foreign banks through WTO-instituted "reforms."



China's export of surplus capital is still limited in comparison to the foreign investments of the US, Europe and Japan and is certainly too small in comparison to the huge export of goods (mostly with non-Chinese brands) from its sweatshops mainly by China-based foreign monopolies. China participates in alliances with other foreign monopolies through cartels, syndicates and the like but is a mere adjunct of the far more developed imperialist powers. It is not yet a major contender for economic territory (sources of raw materials, markets and fields of investment) and for political territory (colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries).

### **Perspective of Marxists-Leninists**

The full restoration of capitalism in the former socialist countries and the rapid degradation of their economic, social, political and cultural conditions have vindicated the correctness of the anti-revisionist struggle since 1956 and the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the GPCR. But in the aftermath of the social turmoil in China, the disintegration of revisionist regimes in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the imperialists headed by the United States have trumpeted that socialism is completely and permanently finished and by implication that communists can never recover and learn from the revisionist betrayal of socialism.

The imperialists have unleashed all kinds of ideological, political, economic, social and cultural offensives against the proletariat and the people. They have asserted that private greed is the engine of progress and that social justice is a sure prescription for poverty. They have trumpeted that the cause of socialism is hopeless and futile and that humankind cannot go any farther than the end of history, which is supposed to be capitalism and liberal democracy. They have unleashed "neoliberal globalization" in utter rejection of any social pretense of the bourgeois state and even of state intervention as an anti-crisis device.

In so short a time, however, the US economy, which is most favored by "neoliberal globalization", has plunged into one round of unprecedented crisis after another. Bush has had to add military Keynesianism to neoliberal globalization. But the problem with stepping up military production is that it cannot really stimulate the economy because of its limited employment potential. Furthermore, the wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan have not resulted in stable conditions of superprofit-taking on

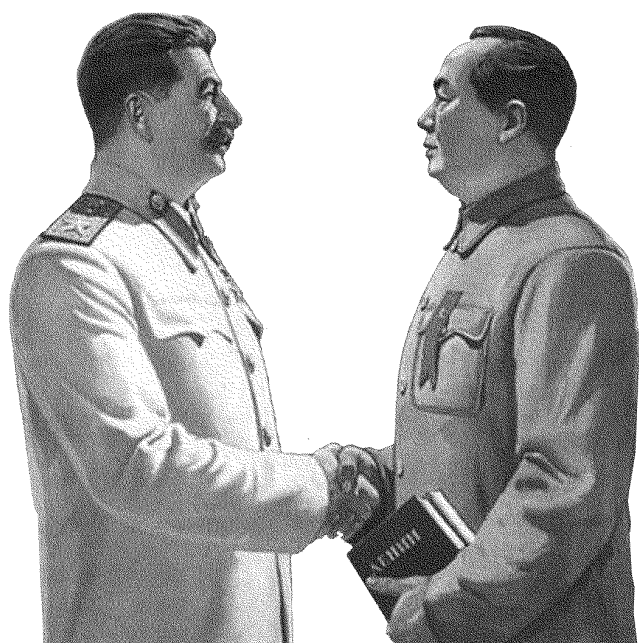
the coveted oil resources. The people of Iraq are fighting fiercely against US aggression and occupation.

The crisis of the world capitalist system is becoming worse and worse. The economic and financial crisis has led to political crisis and to widespread state terrorism and wars of aggression. These are conditions that compel and impel the proletariat and the people to wage all forms of revolutionary struggle. After all, we are still in the global era of the modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. As of now, anti-imperialist movements for national liberation, democracy and socialism are resurgent.

The proletarian revolutionary parties leading the mass movement are confident that they have the scientific guidance not only for realizing the immediate revolutionary objective but also for the long term objective of building socialism until communism. Our source of confidence is Mao's theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship.

To win the national democratic revolution of a new type as in the Philippines, the Filipino Marxist-Leninists have more than adequate scientific guidance from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. They can also sum up, analyze and learn lessons from their rich experience of nearly 40 years of continuous people's war. In moving forward to socialism in the future, they can build on their own achievements and can avail themselves of the positive lessons from decades of successful socialist revolution and construction, the anti-revisionist struggle and the GPCR as well as the negative lessons from decades of the betrayal of socialism by the revisionists. In the whole historical epoch of socialism, they can develop their subjective strength and use to their advantage the cumulatively favorable conditions for revolution.

Right now and in the future, we can cite the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system as a source of our revolutionary optimism and confidence. This crisis is resulting in worse conditions of oppression and exploitation and in chauvinism, racism, religious bigotry, fascism and wars of aggression. These in turn generate the revolutionary resistance of the people. We can still cite the achievements of socialist revolution and construction in the past as an important source of knowledge for building socialism. We can cite further the GPCR as providing us with the basic principles and methods for developing socialism and defeating revisionism until the entire humankind can reach the goal of communism upon the worldwide defeat of imperialism.



# Validity and relevance of the October Revolution in response to the challenges of the 21st century

by Jose Maria Sison

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I propose to discuss the objective conditions and subjective factors that brought about the October Revolution, the continuing validity of the October Revolution despite the disintegration of the Soviet Union and other revisionist-ruled societies and the validity and relevance of the October Revolution in dealing with the conditions of the 21st century.

## **1. Objective conditions and subjective factors that brought about the October Revolution**

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the world had entered the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution. Monopoly capitalism became dominant in the advanced capitalist countries. Finance capital was born out of the merger of bank and industrial capital. The export of surplus capital was gaining importance over the export of surplus goods.

Monopoly firms of the imperialist countries combined and competed with each other through cartels, syndicates and alliances. The colonial and imperialist powers had divided the rest of the world as colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries in political terms and as sources of raw materials, markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence in economic terms. And yet they continued to struggle for a redivision of the world in accordance with the changing balance of forces among them.

Like the bourgeoisie in the era of free competition capitalism, the monopoly bourgeoisie used the slogan of "free trade" to penetrate foreign markets and expand their direct and indirect investments abroad. But in their competition, the imperialist powers in fact became increasingly protectionist economically and aggressive politically. They were driven by their national self-interest towards the first inter-imperialist war, World War I.

Kautsky and his followers who became dominant in the Second International interpreted the global expansion of imperialist capital as a continuous unilinear process for dissolving pre-capitalist formations and effecting industrial capitalist development in the backward countries. But Lenin correctly pointed to the uneven and spasmodic development of capitalism, the recurrent and worsening crises of overproduction and the decadent, aggressive and destructive character of imperialism.

He opposed the opportunist and revisionist line of Kautsky, which promoted social chauvinism, social pacifism and social imperialism. Having grasped well the lessons of the Paris Commune and the necessity of bringing about the dictatorship of the proletariat through the class struggle, he was well prepared to lead the Bolsheviks, the proletariat and the people in realizing the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia,

This huge country with a few islands of industrial development amidst an ocean of feudalism and medievalism was the weakest among the imperialist powers and was itself an object of penetration and manipulation by the stronger competing imperialist powers. At the same time, it was a real giant oppressor of nations and peoples within the Russian empire. The proletariat and the people had to contend with Czarism, representing feudalism and medievalism, and also with the bourgeoisie dominating the modern industrial sector and trying to head off the revolution.

Lenin saw the impoverished and desperate conditions of Russia as favourable for the advance of the Bolshevik party as the revolutionary party of the proletariat, leading the broad masses of the people to overthrow Czarism and install the democratic republic, rallying the peasant masses as the massive reliable ally of the proletariat through the nationalization of land and land reform and militating the proletariat with the demand for an 8-hour workday.

Lenin was ever conscious of the need to carry out a two-stage revolution, where democracy must first be won against

feudalism and repression and where socialism must be subsequently established and developed. For the working class to lead such two-stage revolution, it must be able to build the Red Army and mobilize the people to smash the military and bureaucratic machinery of the counterrevolutionary state. It must rely on the worker-peasant alliance, including the soldiers of worker and peasant origin. Thus, the Bolsheviks succeeded in defeating Czarism and then the bourgeoisie and in building the first sustainable socialist country on one-sixth of the face of the earth.

## **2. Validity of the October Revolution despite the disintegration of the Soviet Union and other socialist societies**

The October 17 Revolution has come to signify all the great revolutionary achievements of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin in establishing the proletarian dictatorship as a requisite of socialist revolution, overcoming civil war and foreign military intervention, reviving the economy through transition measures, building socialist industry, collectivizing and mechanizing agriculture, developing the educational and cultural system of the working class, supporting the international communist movement, fighting and defeating fascism and further pursuing socialist revolution and construction in the face of the threats of US imperialism after World War II.

These achievements can never be belittled. Socialist revolutions in Eastern Europe, Asia and elsewhere have been inspired by the October Revolution, the achievements of the Soviet Union and the work of the Third International. The Soviet Union was unquestionably a socialist country for decades from 1917 to 1956. Its great achievements could not be completely undone overnight. It would take decades for the modern revisionists to subvert and dismantle socialism, from the anti-Stalin coup of Khrushchov in 1956 to the undisguised full-scale restoration of capitalism and disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

There are principles and lessons to be learned from the positive experiences of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Union as well as from the negative experiences involving the "Left" and Right opportunists (represented by Trotsky and Bukharin, respectively) and modern revisionists from Khrushchov to Gorbachov. From the outside, the imperialists unleashed a series of attacks on the Soviet Union, including the war of foreign intervention, economic and military blockade, the fascist invasion and the

Cold War. These did not defeat the Soviet Union. But modern revisionism proved to be the enemy most lethal to the Soviet Union, the main cause of its ultimate destruction.

Insofar as fighting imperialism, classical revisionism and reaction and undertaking socialist revolution and construction are concerned, the October Revolution and the teachings of Lenin remain valid and relevant to this day. But in fighting modern revisionism, we need to study and learn from the history of the Soviet Union and other former socialist countries the lessons on how the bureaucrats and intellectuals became divorced from the working people and how they abandoned the class struggle and the class stand of the revolutionary proletariat. In this regard, we need to understand the struggle of Mao against modern revisionism since 1956 and his theory and practice of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat since 1966.

Mao's theory and practice of continuing revolution aimed at combatting modern revisionism, preventing the restoration of capitalism and consolidating socialism in China. It won victories in ten years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976. Although it was eventually defeated, it succeeded





in posing the problem of modern revisionism and in presenting certain principles and methods for solving the problem. It offers a great deal for proletarian revolutionaries to learn and further develop in order to explain the disintegration of the former socialist systems and to avert the restoration of capitalism when in the future they shall build and develop socialist societies in various countries until they can defeat imperialism on a global scale and bring about communism.

In this period of the temporary defeat of socialism on a global scale, proletarian revolutionaries must be able to answer the questions of the proletariat and people about the past, present and future of the revolutionary cause of socialism. They must contend with the mocking claims of the imperialists and reactionaries that socialism is dead. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and other revisionist-ruled systems, the enemies of socialism have spread notions that are calculated to demoralize the proletariat and the people.

Such notions include the following: that there is no such thing as scientific socialism but only utopian and impracticable socialism, that personal greed rather than social concern can cause social equilibrium and progress, that history can go no further than capitalism and liberal democracy, that the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution is gone, that "neoliberal globalization" is the way to global capitalist development and that the people's struggles for national liberation, democracy and socialism are futile.

In fact, the world has not gone beyond the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because of the large but temporary defeat of socialism caused by modern revisionism. Global conditions have basically retrogressed to those before the October Revolution when there was yet no socialist country as bulwark of the world proletarian revolution and the imperialist powers seemed to be able to do anything they pleased against the toiling masses.

Upon the rise of modern revisionism and ultimately upon the complete restoration of capitalism in the great socialist states, the conditions of oppression and exploitation of the working people by imperialism and reaction have become far worse than ever before. But the resistance of the people is steadily increasing on a global scale.

In so short a time, the concentration and centralization of

capital in the imperialist countries and the chronicity and intensity of economic and financial crisis have become worse than ever before under the auspices of "neoliberal globalization". This has led to the stepping up of military production, state terrorism and wars of aggression. We are practically back to conditions of great disorder in which there was yet no socialist country before World War I but which were the prelude to the emergence of the first socialist country.

So long as there is oppression and exploitation by the monopoly bourgeoisie, there is resistance by the proletariat and people of the world. The epochal struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat continues. So do all the concrete forms of national and class struggles in various countries. The people do not wish the greed of the few to victimize them without end. They fight for national and social liberation from imperialism and reaction. And they strive for greater freedom and social justice to prevail and continue under the principles of scientific socialism.

The need for the revolutionary party of the proletariat continues. It is for leading the proletariat and the people to carry out the revolution in stages on the basis of concrete conditions. It upholds the Marxist-Leninist ideological line against modern revisionism and all forms of subjectivism. It makes sure that the general political line can bring about the victory of democracy and socialism and defeat imperialism and all forms of reaction and is not diverted by either "Left" or Right opportunism. It concentrates the collective will and material strength of the proletarian revolutionaries by following the organizational principle of democratic centralism.

The revolutionary party of the proletariat must arouse, organize and mobilize the broad masses of the people through various forms of struggle. The most important form of struggle is ultimately the smashing of the military and bureaucratic machinery of the counterrevolutionary state and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship or the people's democratic dictatorship under working class leadership, depending on the concrete conditions.

### **3. Dealing with the Conditions and Challenges of the 21st century**

On the basis of the current conditions and trends that we see clearly, we can be optimistic that in the next decade or so the

people will intensify in a dramatic way and on an unprecedented scale their revolutionary struggle for national liberation, democracy and socialism against imperialism and reaction. Let us line up the major conditions that proletarian revolutionaries must deal with in the 21st century, particularly in the early decades where we are now. The century will either be too long for great leaps in the cumulative advance of the revolutionary forces or too short for the entire historical epoch needed for socialism to overpower capitalism.

First, let us observe immediately that the disintegration of the revisionist-ruled systems has led to the acute crisis of the world capitalist system and the unbridled oppression and exploitation of the working people by imperialism and reaction. Conspicuously, the US has been in the forefront of generating economic crisis, political turmoil and wars of aggression. It has enjoyed the unprecedented role of being the sole superpower in command of an obviously expanded world capitalist system through the complete integration of nearly all the former revisionist-ruled countries.

But the expansion of the world capitalist system has actually led to an increase in the number of imperialist powers and to the intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions. The world cannot accommodate too many imperialist powers. The US-led imperialist alliance became crisis-stricken, especially with the phenomenon of stagflation, as soon as the World War II losers were reconstructed and strengthened economically in the late 1960s. The addition of Russia, China and India as big players in the playing field of imperialism spells further crisis and troubles for the original Group of 7 and the original OECD countries.

Second, the policy of "neoliberal globalization" has been a big failure in overcoming the problem of stagflation under Keynesianism and in shoring up the imperialist powers from worse economic and financial crisis. The problem of stagflation is persistent and has been merely covered up by ever rising levels of indebtedness in both imperialist and underdeveloped countries. The imperialist powers headed by the US have applied the policy of "neoliberal globalization" (denationalization, liberalization, privatization and deregulation of economies) at the expense of the world proletariat and the oppressed nations and peoples. And it has aggravated and deepened the crisis of overproduction and of finance capital and pushed the imperialist

powers to compete with each other and adopt protectionist measures as in the decades before World War I and likewise before World War II.

The policy of "neoliberal globalization" has caused such worse crisis that the US has resorted to military Keynesianism. The Bush administration has sought to stimulate the US economy by stepping up military production. In this regard, it has also unleashed war hysteria, wars of aggression and state terrorism on a global scale under the pretext of combating terrorism and so-called rogue states. But the problem with high military production is that it has little employment potential. The US has also maintained a high level of consumerism by outsourcing goods, widening current account deficits and incurring an overly large foreign debt.

Third, despite the glaring failure of "neoliberal globalization" which is actually unbridled monopoly greed camouflaged by the petty bourgeois term "free market", the monopoly bourgeoisie continues to misrepresent its ideas and policies in petty bourgeois terms and give full play to petty bourgeois ideology as an instrument to befuddle not only the petty bourgeoisie but also the working people concerning the social, economic, political and cultural realities. Thus, the imperialists are funding and touting the petty bourgeois-run reformist nongovernmental organizations



as the "civil society" and as the people's part in the triadic "social accord" of states, big business and a docile population.

The monopoly bourgeoisie is using a wide range of instruments (the cultural and educational system, the mass media, the electoral process, think tanks, policy institutes, charity foundations, religious institutions and so on) for promoting big bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas in order to counter the resurgence of the proletarian revolutionary ideology and the revolutionary mass movements against imperialism and for socialism. Of course, various petty bourgeois currents masquerading as proletarian, such as classical revisionism (social democracy), Trotskyism and modern revisionism are still around to assist the monopoly bourgeoisie and trying to outflank the theory and practice of genuine Marxism-Leninism.

But no matter how clever are the ideological and political trappings of the monopoly bourgeoisie, these become futile as the crisis of the world capitalist system worsens and the proletarian revolutionaries and the revolutionary mass movement arise, persevere and further develop the revolutionary struggle. As in the prelude to the October Revolution from the defeat of the 1905 revolution to the February revolution in 1917 when the Bolsheviks appeared to be small and weak, their proletarian revolutionary descendants of today appear likewise, especially in the aftermath of the disintegration of the revisionist-ruled systems from 1989 to 1991. But once more the objective conditions are favourable for the resurgence of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat and the people.

Fourth, the use of higher technology in production and consumption under the auspices of "neoliberal globalization" has accelerated the concentration and centralization of capital in a few imperialist countries. This has aggravated the crisis of overproduction in all types of goods and services. In the aftermath of every crisis of overproduction are the increase of chronic unemployment and the lowering of incomes. The destruction of productive forces is not being segued by any new round of expanding production and reemployment.

The adoption of higher technology by the monopoly bourgeoisie for the purpose of maximizing profits, accumulating capital and reducing the variable capital for labor can only result in aggravating the crisis of overproduction and the narrowing of the market. The higher technology that can be used for deter-

mining needs and market demand, expanding production and accelerating distribution is suitable to socialism and not to monopoly capitalism.

The higher technology for collecting, storing, processing and communicating information and knowledge is mainly under the control of the monopoly bourgeoisie. This kind of technology is used to promote monopoly bourgeois ideology and politics with embellishment by petty bourgeois phraseology, to propagate the petty bourgeois ideology of self-interest and to preoccupy the public with the message of consumerism, sports and entertainment. Most of the personal computers and other gadgets for disseminating information are in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie, particularly the professionals and the youth with a high level of formal education. However, as the crisis of the world capitalist system worsens, the petty bourgeoisie becomes more discontented and more inclined to join up with the working people in progressive alliances against imperialism and reaction.

It is a sign of desperation and weakness that the monopoly bourgeoisie has been driven by crisis and competition to raise profits on new products by commercializing the information technology and other forms of technology that used to be exclusively for the military. Even now these openly available technologies can be used by the revolutionary forces for undertaking information and educational campaigns and for launching tactical offensives. The multi-media based on personal computers have been used to spread revolutionary theory and political messages and to mobilize people for mass actions. The cellphone has been used for precise tactical offensives by revolutionary armies.

Fifth, the contradictions between the working people of the world and the imperialist powers and reactionaries are intensifying. So are those between the countries asserting national independence and the imperialist powers. The imperialist powers are increasingly finding themselves at loggerheads with each other in the political and economic institutions that they have created to harmonize their relations against the working people of the world.

The continuing aggravation of the crisis of the world capitalist system under the policy of "neoliberal globalization" can push the imperialist powers to resort to Keynesianism, to further state monopoly capitalism, intensified monopoly competition and protectionism and to wars of aggression for the redivision of the world. The intensification of the inter-imperialist contradic-

tions generates more favourable conditions for the resistance of the proletariat and people of the world.

Revolutionary parties of the proletariat must lead the resistance of the people in all types of countries, in the imperialist countries and in the dominated countries. The increase of competing imperialist powers deepens the crisis in every imperialist country. The proletariat in every country is driven by worse conditions to intensify resistance through strikes, protest rallies and other concerted actions. The working people and the oppressed nations and peoples suffering the most from imperialist plunder and war are the most hard pressed to rise up in armed revolution.

The crisis conditions of the moment generate the immediate issues of the struggle against monopoly capitalism and local reaction. But in recruiting and developing party members, the revolutionary parties of the proletariat must inculcate in them the historic mission of building socialism up to the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship. There is the need to counter the propaganda of the enemy that socialism is successful only up to a certain point and then fails. There is the need to assure the proletariat and the people that modern revisionism and the restoration of capitalism can be prevented and that socialism can be consolidated repeatedly until it gains the upper hand over imperialism on a global scale and reaches the threshold of communism.



