

The Peruvian and Philippine Revolutions

By Prof. Jose Maria Sison

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I am deeply pleased and honored to be invited to speak before the founding conference of the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Abimael Guzmán.

I understand that this is a conference to consolidate the efforts of a broad international front of organizations and individuals to defend the life of the revolutionary leader Abimael Guzmán and the rights of all Peruvian patriots and progressives who suffer persecution and martyrdom under the heels of the fascist dictatorship of the U.S.-Fujimori regime.

The people of Peru have all the right to fight for national liberation and democracy against U.S. imperialism and the local exploiting classes; and to commence the socialist revolution upon the basic completion of the national democratic revolution through the seizure of political power.

The necessity of the armed revolution in Peru is emphasized by the denigration of the ruling system into an open rule of terror, a fascist dictatorship in the services of U.S. imperialism. The autocratic rule throws away all pretenses of bourgeois democracy and knows no bounds in oppressing and exploiting people.

By way of demonstrating the need for the Filipino and Peruvian peoples and revolutionary forces to support each other, let me discuss the common grounds and basic similarities of their history, objective conditions, subjective revolutionary forces and struggles. Then, let me make comparative comments on the role and experiences of Comrade Gonzalo and myself. Finally, let me appraise the significance of the Peruvian and Philippine revolution at this time.

The Peruvian and Philippine Revolutions

Notwithstanding the great geographic distance between Peru and the Philippines, they became bound up in a single global history as they were dominated by the old type colonialism of Spain for centuries. The Peruvian and Filipino peoples underwent the same barbarities inflicted by colonialism as a major process in the primitive accumulation of capital in Western Europe.

Then, the rise of modern imperialism eventually put the two peoples in the clutches of the same foreign monopoly capitalist power, the United States. The colonial and feudal society would give way to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society under the auspices of U.S. imperialism.

The Peruvian and Filipino peoples have waged revolutionary struggle against their foreign and local oppressors. First, they waged the old type of national democratic revolution within the context of the world bourgeois-capitalist revolution. But the struggle for national liberation and democracy could not be completed. In the case of Peru, it was frustrated and truncated first by British domination and then, in the twentieth century, as is the case of the Philippines, by U.S. imperialism and the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

In both Peru and Philippines, the people are today subjected to the most intolerable forms of neocolonialism, oppression and exploitation and are driven by their own rights and interests, their own suffering and sense of justice to complete the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

This is the new democratic revolution led by the working class through its advanced detachment, the communist party. It is a revolution within the context of the world proletarian-socialist revolution, in the era of modern imperialism and revolution.

The Communist Parties of Peru and the Philippines have sought to integrate the universal theory of

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism on the concrete conditions of their respective countries. This theory has been a guide not only to the ongoing new democratic revolution but also to a comprehension of and the preparation for the socialist and communist future.

The two parties are engaged in a protracted people's war, involving the integration of armed struggle, agrarian revolution and building the mass base. Through the People's War, the central question of the revolution, which is the question of seizing political power, is answered.

The basic alliance of the working class and peasantry is built. This is the foundation of the united front of the basic revolutionary forces, which includes the urban petty bourgeoisie, as well as of the united front of positive forces, which further includes the middle bourgeoisie.

What drives the U.S. imperialists and local reactionaries to unleash terrorism against the people in Peru and the Philippines is that they are mortally afraid of defeat and the loss of their power and privileges in the face of the proletariat and people who are led by Marxist-Leninist parties and who are determined to establish the people's democratic state. In fact, local organs of democratic power are being established on an ever widening scale.

The imposition of fascist dictatorship on the Peruvian people by Fujimori since last year is similar to that by Marcos from 1972 to 1986. This shameless open rule of terror is merely the aggravation of the incessant oppression and exploitation of the people. With or without the formal declaration of martial rule, the grossest violations of civil rights, including the repeated massacres of workers and peasants, have been perpetrated by the reactionary state.

Like all previous devices of U.S. imperialism and the local reactionary classes, the draconian regime of Fujimori will fail to quell the revolutionary struggle of the people and will go down in history in complete ignominy. As in the Philippines, the revolutionary forces and people of Peru can overcome any escalation of repression and become stronger in the course of revolutionary struggle.

Similar Experiences of Revolutionary Cadres

It has been demonstrated in Peru and in the Philippines that when the ideological, political and organizational line of the advanced detachment of the proletariat is correct all the revolutionary forces and the people advance from one victory to another and march from one stage of development to a new and higher one.

But in the course of people's war, especially when the balance of forces still allows the enemy to be on the strategic offensive and the revolutionary forces are still waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare, there is no absolute and complete guarantee for individual cadres of the revolutionary party to be free from arrest, torture and death. The Peruvian and Filipino revolutionaries are familiar with these events.

Comrade Guzmán and I have similar experiences with regard to the risks and difficulties that cadres in our position face, whether we are in motion doing field work or in a relatively stationary position doing office work. The enemy is no respecter of civil rights and can draw information in various ways. There are many lines of communications going up to the central leadership that can be vulnerable, if every line of communication is not thoroughly safeguarded.

Like Comrade Abimael Guzmán in 1992, I was captured by the enemy in 1977. When I had the first opportunity to make a public declaration after my arrest and torture, I exposed the torture and said that the enemy can imprison a revolutionary leader but not the revolutionary movement. I urged the revolutionary forces and the people to continue the revolutionary struggle. At that time, the fascist dictator Marcos boastfully put me on display on television together with other captured leaders of the revolutionary movement. I did what I could to counter the arrogance of the enemy and encourage the people to fight more fiercely for their revolutionary cause.

Comrade Guzmán was presented in a cage on television in order to humiliate him, he made a good

account of himself by describing his own arrest as barely a bend in the road, by urging his party, the people's army and the Peruvian people to intensify their revolutionary struggle and by calling for a Popular Front of Liberation. He continued to inspire the people and revolutionary forces of Peru and the world. He urged all of them to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Comrade Mao Zedong. One [who is] in prison and under the threat of death is in a special position to inspire the people, when he demonstrates that even one in his situation can continue to fight.

I understand the dangers and pressures that a revolutionary leader like Comrade Guzmán must contend with in prison. Aside from the unjust laws obtaining under a fascist dictatorship, there are arbitrary actions of those in power beyond those decrees that by themselves are arbitrary. There are those cruel informal ways by which a political prisoners can be tortured and killed.

In my personal experience, solitary confinement is an excruciating form of torture. Every minute can be like a ton of lead falling on one's brain. To win the test, one has to have a strong revolutionary will, a high confidence in the revolutionary movement of the people and a wealth of mental resources and experience.

While a political prisoner is in solitary confinement, any harm can be done to his person. All sorts of crude or subtle ways of further torturing or killing him are possible. The more arbitrary and the more brutal are the ways of the enemy against the people, the greater is the likelihood that the captive like Comrade Guzmán is murdered in prison.

In certain respects, the Peruvian reactionary authorities and the Fujimori regime in particular have been worse than their Philippine counterparts. Massacres of political prisoners have repeatedly occurred in Peruvian prisons. So far none of these have occurred in official detention camps in the Philippines. As in Peru, the massacres are done by the enemy outside the official detention camps and prisons in the Philippines.

There is more pretense at allowing political prisoners to have the right to legal counsel in the Philippines. So far, there is as yet no law making Philippine lawyers liable for "treason" or "apology for terrorism" for acting as legal counsel of political prisoners. As in Peru, progressive lawyers have been threatened with death and murder outside of official channels.

The charge of treason, and similar charges, requiring the identification of a foreign power as the principal of the alleged "traitor" or "subversive" have long been given up by the Philippine reactionaries. Instead, they use other repressive laws to imprison revolutionaries.

In view of the comparisons that I have made, there is acutely urgent need for the consolidation and expansion of the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Abimael Guzmán. There is the need to rouse the conscience of mankind or world public opinion to condemn the barbarities of the U.S.-Fujimori regime and to compel this regime to submit to the civilized norms of morality and legality.

It is a shame that the U.S.-Fujimori regime can do what it pleases to do in committing the grossest violations of civil rights just because there is much ahead in the world through bourgeois institutions and press a vicious campaign of imperialist propaganda demonizing the revolutionary party and mass movement represented by Comrade Guzmán.

The rights of Abimael Guzmán have been so flagrantly violated that he is entitled to immediate release from prison. He has been deprived of the right to due process. He has been subjected to a mock trial. He has been deprived of legal counsel before, during and after the mock trial. He has been accused of treason without identification of the alleged enemy country of Peru. He has been judged by masked military officers in a kangaroo court. And his lawyer, Dr. Alfredo Crespo, has been subjected to retaliation with the false charge of treason simply because he has tried to do his best to defend his client. Other lawyers, Peruvian and foreign, have also been repressed in connection with the case.

Comrade Guzmán has been in solitary confinement since his arrest. He is being subjected to what is

legally called excessive and cruel punishment. In view of the barbaric attitude of the U.S.-Fujimori regime towards him, it is a distinct possibility that he can be murdered by one of several methods while he is in solitary confinement. No less than Fujimori has repeatedly expressed the death wish for him and his intention to reintroduce the death penalty over political cases.

It is an urgent task of the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Abimael Guzmán to gather and bring about on a world scale the utmost moral and legal pressure on the U.S.-Fujimori regime to let Guzmán be in the company of other political prisoners, be visited by his relatives and friends, have access to legal counsel, be examined and treated by doctors and dentists of his choice and to be visited and monitored by the International Red Cross.

As in my previous case under the U.S.-Marcos regime or in the earlier case of Nelson Mandela, the case of Guzmán is supposed to be adoptable by Amnesty International as a case of a political prisoner entitled to due process and humane treatment. But has this and other organizations claiming to advocate human rights stepped forward demanding due process or his release because of the violation of his rights to due process? The civil rights of Guzmán under Peruvian and international law (particularly the Geneva Convention and the Charter of Civil and Political Rights) have been so grossly violated that he is entitled to immediate release.

In the case of any prominent prisoner of war like Guzmán, legal and moral action are important in staying the murderous hand of the enemy. But most important of all is the development of the revolutionary struggle of the people against the terrorist regime of the U.S.-Fujimori regime. The revolutionary struggle provides several possibilities for the release of the prisoners of war. In my case, it was the overthrow of the fascist regime of Marcos that ultimately effected my release.

The World Significance of the Peruvian and Philippine Revolutions

The imperialists and their lackeys know best who are their most resolute and most effective adversaries; and they unleash against them the most brutal attacks and the vilest propaganda. The parties guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism are their prime targets today.

In Peru and in the Philippines, the proletariat through its advanced detachment has benefited from the light of revolutionary theory and practice in three stages of development: That of Marx and Engels, that of Lenin and Stalin and that of Mao.

The communist parties of Peru and the Philippines are guided by the most comprehensive and profound ideas and practical lessons, ranging from the clear definition of scientific socialism and the prototype of the proletarian dictatorship in the Paris Commune in the era of premonopoly capitalism, through the socialist revolution and construction in one country after World War I and in several countries after World War II in the era of modern imperialism and proletarian revolution, to the theory of continuing revolution, combating modern revisionism and preventing the restoration of capitalism under the proletarian dictatorship and the first great example of the proletarian cultural revolution.

The armed revolutionary movement in Peru and the Philippines is significant not only to the people of these two countries but also to the entire people of the world. The flames of the People's War shed light on the revolutionary road at a time that the forces of imperialism and all reaction seem to be able to keep the world in darkness, while modern revisionism has gone naked as bureaucrat monopoly capitalism and all sorts of monsters are coming out in the social turmoil on a widening scale.

After all the false claim that capitalism has triumphed over socialism, the imperialists are worried to death that the capitalist crisis of overproduction (accelerated by high technology, finance capitalism and neocolonialism) has far worsened and that social turmoil has rapidly spread since the disintegration of the revisionist ruling parties and regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet

Union.

The theory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism has been vindicated and shines forth as the guide to the proletariat and people of the world in their struggles against imperialism and all reaction and for national liberation and socialism. The U.S. imperialists and the local reactionaries are therefore doing everything in their power to suppress the proletarian revolutionary parties guided by and implementing this theory.

The communist parties of Peru and the Philippines are today at the forefront of the world's proletarian revolution. They have advanced on the road of armed revolution in their respective countries and are demonstrating to the proletariat and the people of the world that they can self-reliantly wage revolutionary struggle and march from victory to victory.

The Peruvian and Filipino communists are among the proletarian revolutionaries of the world who are consciously persevering in revolutionary struggle in order to gain ground for the world proletarian revolution, take advantage of the widening social turmoil in the world capitalist system and push the resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement to a new and higher level.