

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Impact on the Philippines and Continuing Global Significance

**Contribution to the Symposium
Marking the 30th Anniversary of the GPCR
December 14-15, 1996**

**By Jose Maria Sison
CPP Founding Chairman**

I wish to express my warmest greetings to the China Study Group of New York, *Monthly Review* and ESU of the New York School and all the participants of the Symposium, "Reexamining the Chinese Cultural Revolution", which is being held to mark the 30th anniversary of the launching of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) as well as the 20th anniversary of its effective end in September 1976.

I also wish to thank the organizers for inviting me to contribute a paper devoted to the GPCR, in particular about its impact and the way this ended or continued in revolutionary struggles in the third world. Due to some burden of work, I am unable to submit on time a more elaborate paper on the impact of the GPCR on the entire third world. But let me deal with this in general terms and give some focus on the Philippines and proceed to make some remarks on the continuing global significance of the GPCR.

For your reference, there is a longer article which is pertinent to the impact of the GPCR on the Philippines. This is "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as Guide to the Philippine Revolution", contributed by Armando Liwanag, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, to the International Seminar on Mao Zedong Thought, held in 1993 in

Germany, on the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of Mao Zedong.

And let me take the opportunity to cite the General Declaration on Mao Zedong Thought, issued by the aforesaid seminar. It upholds the theory of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship and the GPCR as the greatest contribution of Mao to the further development of Marxism-Leninism. This declaration diametrically opposes the common view of the imperialists and the Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists that the GPCR was a total disaster.

Impact of the GPCR on the Philippines

The GPCR inspired the building and strengthening of many Marxist-Leninist parties in the third world. To this day, a significant number of them persevere in revolutionary struggle in South-east Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa. Some of them are in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, upholding Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

At the forefront are revolutionary parties of the proletariat guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism and leading new-democratic revolutions through people's war against imperialism and reaction. They are the most tempered and most serious advanced detachments of the proletariat. They follow the basic teachings of Mao Zedong and respond to the central question of revolution.

They stand in sharp contrast to the parties that previously avowed themselves to be Marxist-Leninist and antirevisionist but have become drawn to the path of revisionism and reformism. They have also withstood the attempts of the followers of Deng Xiaoping and Enver Hoxha to fragment and destroy the antirevisionist parties as well as certain attempts to reduce adher-

ence to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to a question of defending one or another Chinese figure or group regarded as the principal successor or supporter of Mao.

The parties most prone to abandoning the Marxist-Leninist position have been those constituted by the unremoulded petty-bourgeois, especially in the industrial capitalist countries. In the late '70s and early '80s, they were confused and driven towards liquidationism or abandonment of Mao's line by the Deng revisionist line of reversing the GPCR, betraying socialism and making out US imperialism and the bourgeoisie as the principal positive forces for China's economic development and for a pretended opposition to Soviet social-imperialism, as well as by the Hoxha line of holding Mao chiefly responsible for Deng's misuse of China's three-world diplomatic concept as a license for capitalist restoration in collusion with US imperialism, as a way of capitulating to the bourgeoisie under the guise of combating Soviet social imperialism and as a substitute for proletarian internationalism.

The theory and practice of the GPCR pertained directly to China as a socialist country, with the proletarian revolutionaries, the proletariat and the rest of the masses striving to continue the revolution under proletarian dictatorship in order to consolidate socialism, combat revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism. But in a comprehensive and profound way, the GPCR has also inspired and influenced the revolutionary parties of the proletariat in the third world even as these are not yet in the process of socialist revolution and construction. It has enhanced the understanding of the basic principles for making the new-democratic and socialist stages of the revolution and for aiming at the ultimate goal of communism.

It has urged the study and application of the basic teachings of the great communists, including the major contributions of Mao in the advance of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, political economy

and social science. It has educated proletarian revolutionaries in building the vanguard party and in carrying out the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war and subsequently the socialist revolution and construction.

It has clarified the basic principles and methods of class struggle for combating modern revisionism, preventing the restoration of capitalism and consolidating socialism in socialist society, up to the threshold of communism in the long process of making a radical rupture from the millennia-old institution and consequences of private ownership of the means of production. Thus, it has shed light as never before on the road to communism.

The proletarian revolutionaries in the Philippines reestablished the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968 on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. They sought to apply the universal theory of the proletariat on the concrete conditions of the Philippines. They drew inspiration and encouragement from the full range of Marxist-Leninist teachings, from the Chinese revolution as a whole and from the GPCR.

They earnestly learned crucial lessons from the experience of the Chinese revolution and criticized and repudiated modern revisionism centered in the Soviet Union. Thus they armed themselves with a powerful ideological weapon to fight and defeat the long-running line of revisionism and opportunism of the Lava revisionist renegades in the old merger party of the Communist and Socialist parties. They studied and endeavored to apply the teachings of Mao Zedong on the law of contradiction and social practice, on Party building and the rectification movement, the class analysis of semicolonial and semifeudal conditions, the new-democratic revolution, the strategy and tactics of protracted people's war and united front policy.

The revolutionary forces and the people advanced from victory to victory for so long as the CPP adhered to the ideological

line of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and to the general political line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. From 1969 to 1977, the CPP grew in strength and became nationwide in scale and deeply rooted among the masses in the course of the armed revolution against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Departing from the "Tribute to Mao Zedong" written by Amado Guerrero, chairman of the CPP Central Committee, soon after Mao's death, the central leadership of the CPP did not resolutely and militantly defend Mao's Marxist-Leninist line and accomplishments against Dengist attack even after this started to become full scale and conspicuous after 1978 when the policy of capitalist-oriented reforms and "opening up" to the world capitalist system was proclaimed. Eventually, the silence led to the neglect of the study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and to the growth of subjectivism and opportunism, despite the continuous formal declarations of adherence to Mao Zedong Thought and of upholding the GPCR in CPP documents.

Mao Zedong became reduced to just one in an amorphous array of revolutionary leaders. Even the petty-bourgeois radical leaders of anti-imperialist movements in Central America gained a standing higher than Mao's among some members of the CPP Central Committee. These stirred up the revisionist notion that the Philippine revolution could win only if it had direct or indirect Soviet military and financial assistance. They frowned upon the principle of self-reliance. And they started to consider the Soviet Union as socialist in violation of the CPP's long-standing criticism and repudiation of Soviet revisionism and social-imperialism.

Contrary to the facts, the subjectivist notion arose that the Philippines was no longer semifeudal and that the US-Marcos regime had industrialized and urbanized the country to the extent that the strategic line of people's war, requiring the encirclement

of the cities from the countryside, was no longer valid. The worst of the "Left" opportunists called for armed urban insurrection as the principal form of struggle. And the worst of the Right opportunists called for urban-based legal struggle as the principal form of struggle and for liquidating the leading role and independent initiative of the CPP in the united front.

The Right opportunists became assertive from 1986 onward under the influence of the US-Aquino regime and later on by Gorbachovism. Frustrated by their own errors and setbacks, the "Left" opportunists openly swung to the Right in 1989 and joined the long-running Right opportunists along a revisionist and liquidationist line under the influence of events in China and the Soviet-bloc countries.

The "Left" opportunists had inflicted the most severe damage on the revolutionary movement with their revisionist concept of armed struggle, divorced from painstaking mass work and corrosive of the principle of self-reliance. The damage was only overshadowed by the advances made by the proletarian revolutionaries and revolutionary masses up to 1986.

Because good Party cadres and members continued to stand on the CPP's strong foundation in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the revisionists and opportunists could not go on spreading their erroneous lines and inflicting damage to the CPP and the revolutionary movement. Exactly when they were at the peak of their anti-CPP activities, the CPP was ready to launch a rectification movement. Since 1992, this movement has been conducted and has won resounding victories.

The CPP owes to Mao Zedong the principle and method of rectification. It has been able to strengthen itself ideologically, politically and organizationally by reaffirming the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. It has defeated the revisionists and liquidationists. It has also thwarted the imperialist ideological and political offensive.

This offensive uses as grist the disintegration of the revisionist bureaucrat capitalist regimes in the former Soviet-bloc countries, the restoration of capitalism in China and the uprisings in 80 Chinese cities in 1989, especially the massacre at Tienanmen; and misrepresents the revisionist regimes as socialist and as proof of the futility of the socialist cause in order to dissuade the people from the revolutionary cause.

The imperialist offensive also involves the use of Filipino revisionist renegades and anticommunist petty-bourgeois grouplets in carrying out anti-CPP propaganda as a component of the psychological warfare in the US-instigated "low-intensity conflict". Thanks to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the CPP has been able to consolidate its ranks and continues to reap victories in performing the critical and constructive tasks of the rectification movement.

By reaffirming and carrying out the basic revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in ideology, politics and organization, the CPP has revitalized itself and has become more confident than ever before in holding high the banner of proletarian revolutionary leadership and carrying out the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war.

It is proud of persevering in the highest form of revolutionary struggle and being at the forefront at a time that the anti-imperialist and socialist movements are at an ebb on a global scale. At the same time, it is humbly well aware of the tremendous odds that it faces. It is conscious of performing its internationalist duty by carrying the Philippine revolution forward and contributing to the stimulation and resurgence of the anti-imperialist and socialist movements.

The Continuing Global Significance of the GPCR

Let me make just a few remarks on the continuing global significance of the theory and practice of the GPCR. I hope that these are relevant and useful in your discussions. I make these remarks against the notion that because the GPCR was defeated it has lost significance and validity.

As long as capitalism exists, the cause of socialist revolution does not cease. In making revolution, there are twists and turns, victories and defeats until total victory is won on the scale of one country and that of the whole world. The struggle between capitalism and socialism will continue for a whole historical epoch, as Lenin and Mao pointed out, until socialism wins on a global scale and communism becomes possible.

The proletarian revolutionaries never gave up the cause of socialism when the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871 or the Russian revolution of 1905 was defeated. They were never discouraged when the fascists crushed the communist parties and invaded the Soviet Union and other countries. The capitalist counterrevolution by the revisionists in socialist countries does not spell the end of the socialist cause. The proletarian revolutionaries always come out the wiser and more victorious when they learn lessons from previous victories and defeats.

1. The fact that the GPCR triumphed in Mao's time should not be glossed over. Until now in the history of mankind, there has never been as intensive and extensive a democratic process as the GPCR, with the proletariat and the people being able to express themselves freely, seize back the authority usurped by capitalist-roaders and overthrow such deeply entrenched high officials of the Party and the state. The victory of the GPCR came as the culmination of a series of struggles between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois renegade line within the Com-

unist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese socialist state. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie started to simmer in 1956, following the overthrow of the proletariat by the revisionists in the Soviet Union and the basic socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production in China and in the course of the Eighth Congress of the CPC.

The basic principles and practical methods that Mao drew up for the GPCR were guided by and developed from the basic teachings of his great communist predecessors and arose from the two-line struggle within the CPC and from the lessons learned from the building of socialism by Lenin and Stalin, from the achievements and shortcomings of Stalin and from the betrayal of socialism by the Soviet revisionists.

Among the points that Mao put forward during the GPCR were the following: that the main contradiction in socialist society is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that class struggle is the key link in all spheres, that revolutionary politics must be in command, that the mass line must be pursued, that both the mode of production and the superstructure must be revolutionized, that the youth and the masses must be trained and gain experience as revolutionary successors through cultural revolution, that there must be the dialectical interaction and mutual supervision and cooperation between the leadership and the masses, that there must be a three-in-one combination of cadres, masses and experts, that there must be freedom and discipline, that special attention must be paid to the revolutionary education of the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy lest they become the ideological and social base of revisionism and capitalist restoration.

Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and the like opposed the proletarian revolutionary line of Mao with such notions as the harmony of Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, self-cultivation and expertise above the heads of the masses, dying out of the class struggle, the main contradiction in socialist society is between the back-

ward productive forces and the advanced relations of production, the Kautskyite "theory of productive forces" (building socialism is merely an economic operation), dealing with labor power and means of production as commodities subject to the capitalist law of value, the consolidation of the national democratic revolution and Bukharinite prolongation of concessions to the national bourgeoisie and the rich peasants and shunning the restriction and eventual elimination of bourgeois rights.

The Chinese capitalist roaders wanted to overthrow Mao and his proletarian revolutionary line. In the demagogic fashion of the Soviet revisionists, they depicted him as guilty of the cult of personality and even as a feudal autocrat. But on the way to the GPCR, Mao succeeded in putting forward the general line of socialist revolution and construction, launching the Great Leap Forward and building the people's communes, making a comprehensive critique of Soviet modern revisionism and defeating the most overt Right opportunists from 1957 to 1959 and redirecting the socialist education movement against the Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road as the main target.

What makes the theory and practice of the GPCR the greatest achievement of Mao is that by this he was able to identify the crucial problems that, if unsolved, can spell the peaceful change of socialism into capitalism and to win victory in the solution of those problems up to a significant level in a significant period of time. The defeat of the GPCR urges us to learn both positive and negative lessons, in the same way that Marx analyzed the Paris Commune and upheld its revolutionary significance.

Some lessons include the necessity of combatting ultra-democracy and factionalism, ensuring that the Left win over the Middle to isolate the Right, using due process in addition to Party leadership and mass movement in order to narrow the target and limit the number of those subject to punitive measures, directing the ideological and political offensive against the worst forces and

factors, using education and persuasion on those who merely lag behind and preventing the return to power of the incorrigible and systematic capitalist-roaders like Deng Xiaoping. Because of serious errors, the proletarian revolutionary succession to Mao could not be fulfilled all the way after his death.

2. The Chinese revisionists who have reversed the proletarian revolutionary line of Mao and falsely judged the GPCR as a total disaster cannot gloat endlessly over their betrayal of socialism. The actual restoration of capitalism in China indubitably proves the correctness of Mao in putting forward the theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the GPCR. The basic revisionist notions of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping against the socialist line of Mao have led to capitalist counterrevolution and the unbridled exploitation and oppression of the proletariat and people by the imperialists and the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists still masquerade as communists and pretend to run a socialist state. But the truth can be easily drawn from the facts. The class rule of the proletariat has been overthrown in all spheres and the capitalist-oriented reforms and integration of China into the world capitalist system have created a powerful bureaucrat and private comprador big bourgeoisie. Especially after Mao's criticism of Soviet revisionism and monopoly bureaucrat capitalism, it is naive of some people to say that China is socialist simply because of the existence of state-owned enterprises and the formal rule of a communist party. These are merely the base of a bureaucrat monopoly bourgeoisie, which is growing as a comprador big bourgeoisie in collusion with the imperialists and private bourgeoisie in the Chinese economy.

It is important for the symposium to clarify and demonstrate how the Chinese revisionists and bureaucrat capitalists have revised the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong

Thought in philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism, overthrown the class dictatorship of the proletariat, redirected and reorganized the CPC, adopted and enforced policies and laws that have destroyed the socialist character of China and turned it into capitalist in politics, economy and culture and in fact inflicted severe oppression and exploitation on the broad masses of the people by the imperialists and the domestic Chinese bourgeoisie.

Mao said before that when the revisionists come to power they impose fascism on the proletariat and the people. There is certainly the fascist application of open terror and mass deception when in the name of stability and socialist labor discipline the workers are prohibited from and punished for organizing themselves and acting in concert against the foreign monopoly firms and the domestic big bourgeoisie which have extracted superprofits from cheap Chinese labor.

It is interesting to try answering the following questions: how much longer will the bureaucrat and private capitalists use the signboards of the communist party and the socialist state to legitimize and enforce their bourgeois class rule before giving way to openly anticommunist political liberalization as the inevitable consequence of economic liberalization; and whether there are still sufficiently resolute and courageous proletarian revolutionaries to avail of the legacy of Mao Zedong and the GPCR and lead the masses in a revolutionary movement for socialism.

3. The completely undisguised restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Soviet Union verify and vindicate the correctness of Mao's critique of modern revisionism and the theory and practice of the GPCR. The direction in which the Chinese revisionists are taking China is presaged by the earlier 35-year experience of the Soviet revisionist renegades.

In a manner of speaking, the Chinese revolution was overtaken by the betrayal of socialism in the Soviet Union in 1956. Mao's

opponents took inspiration from the Soviet revisionists and tried to cast away his proletarian revolutionary line. But Mao prevailed while he was alive. His successful resistance to modern revisionism and defense of Chinese socialism actually lasted for 20 years from 1956 to 1976 and gave him the opportunity to make a pathbreaking critique of an unprecedented phenomenon, which was revisionism in power and capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union.

A necessary component of Mao's theory and practice of the GPCR is his comprehensive and profound critique of Soviet modern revisionism. History presented to him the task of analyzing something unprecedented, revisionism subverting and gaining power in a socialist society. And he performed his task well, up to predicting correctly the undisguised restoration of capitalism and disintegration of the revisionist regimes. Quite a number of people had believed that Khrushchov would build the material and technical foundation of communism in the Soviet Union in twenty years' time and later on that Brezhnev's "real socialism" was irreversible.

4. Mao's theory and practice of continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship through the GPCR is indispensable to proletarian revolutionaries in understanding the problems of making socialist revolution and construction in the face of imperialism, revisionism and reaction.

Without this theory and practice, Marxist-Leninists would be at a loss in the face of the attempt of the imperialists, the revisionists and all their anticommunist petty-bourgeois camp followers to completely discredit the socialist record of Lenin, Stalin and Mao, further attack socialism by misrepresenting the anti-Stalin and anti-Mao revisionist regimes as socialist and prate about the futility of the socialist cause.

With Mao's critique of modern revisionism and his theory and practice of the GPCR, there is ample scientific basis for revolu-

tionary foresight and optimism and for the confidence that when socialist societies shall again arise from the crisis of imperialism and upsurge of proletarian revolution, the communists will have a better grasp of what to do in upholding, defending and advancing socialism towards the ultimate goal of communism.

5. Because of the defeat of socialism since 1956 in the Soviet Union and conspicuously since 1978 in China, the proletariat and the people of the world are still very much in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution and are being subjected to ever worsening conditions of exploitation and oppression. (Hua Guofeng from 1976 to 1978 was comparable to Malenkov from 1954 to 1956 as a transition figure, already encircled by the revisionists.)

The centralization and concentration of capital are more rapid than ever before in the entire history of capitalism because of the use of high technology and the most speculative forms of finance capital. The destructive consequences of present-day capitalism are unprecedented in both industrial capitalist countries and underdeveloped countries. The uneven development of capitalism is far grosser than ever before, as most evident in the general run of third world and former Soviet-bloc countries.

Insofar as the new-democratic and socialist revolutions will still have to be waged in various countries at different times, the basic teachings of the great communists from Marx to Mao and the lessons from successful revolutions will continue to be relevant and applicable long into the future. The basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought shall be upheld and further developed on the basis of persistent, worsened and new concrete conditions.

In closing, I wish you all the success in the symposium and I eagerly await the results to be published. #