

WILL THERE BE A SECOND PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION?

by Ramon Jalipa

PROLOGUE

The peasants' makeshift huts along the lush, serene and beautiful countryside and the poor men's ghetto besides towering edifices and palatial homes of a city are for the artist and the poet, an interesting subject for their canvass and pen to capture. But to a progressive-minded Filipino it is a scenario—the epitome of contemporary Philippines, depicting the tragic drama of people wallowing in the quagmire of poverty and injustices. It is a masterpiece portrait of the people who are born in a land of bounty, reared by the Christian and democratic ideals, and guaranteed with the sacred and inalienable rights; yet, are struggling with the contradictions of affluence and poverty, beauty and ugliness, hope and dejection, peace and chaos. It visualizes the sad plight of 80% of the nation's 38 million people who, day after day, are losing their faith and confidence in the establishment.

Amidst this deplorable situation the awakened sector sought the masses' liberation. Taking the high road to dissent, they marched out in the streets, massed in the public squares, and picketed government offices to denounce and demand action on the smouldering grievances and of the alternatives laid upon, none had bothered the minds of men most than that of a revolutionary change.

In lieu of this, one is led to ask the possibility and necessity of a revolution in this crucial time. What good will a revolution do to the already disordered state of Philippine society? Will a chaotic struggle assure the Filipino people of a just and human society, a "Great Again society" or what, if in the process of achieving it, countless lives and properties will be lost?

The Reserved Power of the People

Revolution is defined by Webster as "a fundamental change in political organization, or in a government, or it is the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler, and the substitution of another by the governed." Marx, the father of Communism, said that it is the "climax of the class struggle." It is, according to Carl Friedrich in his book *Revolution* "a sudden overthrow of an established order and its focal point is the alternation of political leadership, and upon that of political participation."

Basing on the aforementioned definitions, revolution is therefore the common endeavor of the people to change by way of overthrowing an established order and substituting it with a new one believed to benefit the people. But then are the people justified to stage a revolution which would undeniably destroy themselves and their properties? Is there such a right of the people as a right to revolution?

John Locke, an eminent political philosopher of the 19th century opined that revolution is the "reserved right and power of the people" which could be exercised when they had already lost their right to exercise their constitutionally-guaranteed rights. In his *Theory of the Right of Revolution*, which is corollary to his Social Contract Theory, Locke emphasized that revolution could be made only when the government becomes absolute and tyrannical. He said that because government was established by the people's consent through a contract, the government and the people are bound to each other only on the agreed conditions and acting beyond it would constitute a violation of the contract. That is, when the government trans-

cends its constitutional limits by becoming absolute and tyrannical, it loses the consent and trust of the governed who thereupon have the right to abrogate the contract by peaceful or violent means. The people has the sole and absolute right and power to overthrow such government and to establish according to Jefferson "a new form of government laying its foundations on such principles as to them shall most likely affect their safety and happiness."

But with the present regrettable state of society and government of the Philippines, do the people possess the right to destroy the system? Do the present social conditions warrant a violent revolutionary change?

Recent Shortcomings and the Revolution

With gnawing poverty and injustices, the people are certainly losing their faith and confidence in the efficacy of the government to effect a progressive change. The subsequent concatenation of events have seemingly lent a positive gesture to the chaotic alternative among the faces of disgruntled masses. Every day newspapers display in shrieking headlines, stories of various crimes committed against the people by the oligopolistic class and also of violent demonstrations dispersed by truncheon wielding riot policemen. There were the Bantay Plunder, Negros Landgrabbing, January 26 and 30 riots, Tayag Arrest, Mindanao Gold Rush and many more which had only led the people to think of revolution not in pessimism but optimism.

In the light of these circumstances soothsayers predict that it would not be too long that a revolution will occur in this country. What with President Marcos himself admitting in his speech two years ago that the country "is sitting on the top of a seething volcano ready to erupt anytime with or without communist proddings?" Even Dr. Teodoro Agoncillo, a known historian, in his article in *Weekly Nation* foresees that revolution will come within a decade due to the revolutionary conditions of society. He further asserted that the emergence of a charismatic leader will hasten its coming. Moreover, the resurgence of the Huks and the advent of the marauding paramilitary units and goonstabularies have further instilled fear and discontentment among the poor peasants. This is further accentuated by the students ever-growing

defiance on the government who is in an all-out campaign of repression. This stifling of the disenchanting masses of today might be a prelude to a perilous day of reckoning and culmination of the unfinished struggle of the old revolutionary heroes in 1896.

Historical Perspective

History bares the fact that the conditions which had caused so many upheavals in the past still persists to the present. The widespread discontentment arising from poverty and injustices which are concomitant to a rebellion or revolution is very much in sight. The oppressive and exploitative forces that besieged the Filipinos in the colonial era are still around pressing hard the masses into the mire of poverty and dejection. History will also unveil a sad fact that the crucial factors that brought about the hundreds of perilous strifes in the past are presently manifested by the status quo. Oppression in those times by way of the inequitous distribution of wealth and power are still reprehensible from the many injustices perpetrated by the oligarchic and bureaucratic elite in both remote and non-remote areas of the country. The many purges made by the colonizers are still around as reflected by the fascistic acts of repression and intimidation of radicals like Nilo Tayag. The guardia-civil who were on the rampage tagging "insurrectos" in the pre-revolutionary era are reincarnated by the present government in the form of para-military units, as the "monks" and BSDU's, who would break into the stillness and darkness of the night terrorizing peasants suspected as "Huks" or "Huk sympathizers."

These present situations are indeed like those of pre-revolutionary era in 1894. The similar fascistic measures employed by the establishment in an attempt to suppress the continual cry for change and reforms. What has the government done anyway? Has it given the students the proper answer to their grievances? It did not. It only gave them a horrible answer by way of unleashing the stampeding, wild and dreaded riot policemen (ala-Gestapo?) to beat and trample student revolutionaries in peaceful demonstrations - which would become riotous with their presence. And yet here are the phrasemongers of the government talking of Liberal Democracy, like the old spanish colonizers promising the filipinos in the past of reforms. to be given

the chance to function in this country. What liberal democracy are the Malacañang people talking about? The present democracy the people has, is not a real democracy. It is a reactionary democracy perverted by greed of corrupt politicians and pressures of by the "democratic-preaching" Americans. No amount of paperwork and lip-words can stem the rising tides of dissatisfaction, nowadays. Like the futile attempts of the Czarist Regime in Russian to prevent the Bolsheviks Revolution, the empty promises for reforms and the Constitutional Convention might just go down into oblivion. The sufferings and misery of the Filipino masses have already reached its apogee and this is a fact which can no longer be denied and covered by the phrasemongers and opinion-makers of the establishment.

There is, therefore, the imperative need for change. The change must of course, be the proper change. It must truly and fully alter the disparaging set-up and state of the society and government. The change has to be a real change aiming to uproot the "roots" of the ills

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of the nation. And there is no other change that could bring about a desired change than a radical or revolutionary change. A change that must lead to the virtual extinction of the "trioka of the isms" which has unmade the filipinos' lives. The change must not be a change that will take years, decades or centuries. Time can never be relied upon to change the plight of the Filipino people.

Time and Change: Similarities in Contradictions

While it is true that change is concomitant with time, yet it does not always follow that time can bring about change. There are things which can never be changed by time for they are eternal. There are also things which can be changed gradually but will take long depending on those who keep them. Such things are those which are safely guarded and preserved by its inventors and these things are the shameful colonial heritage of the Philippines. Those antiquated feudal system and imperialistic schemes which are presently creeping in the socio-political

veins of the nation be abolished. The grandiose and exploitative scheme of exploitation that enslaved the filipinos in the past still persist to the present. The changes were mainly superficial. The system is still there, what only changes were the oppressive and exploitative hands to manipulate the system; like water changed from liquid to solid state, changing only the form, not the content.

Glimmering in modernity, the Philippines with its unbroken neo-colonial set-up is still the very same Philippine Islands or Islas Filipinas in the remote past. It is only in name that the Philippines is an independent country, but in practice it is still as good as any colony - like Hongkong controlled by profit-hungry foreign capitalists. Behind the modern clothes he wears, the Filipino is still the very same person struggling to get out from the labyrinth of lethargy and oppression.

While skyscrapers rise majestically in modernity, below them are the filthy shacks - the same kind of shelter the poor filipinos dwelt in the past. While lands were, through modern scientific know-how, transformed into productive farms, there is still the tenant whose life is tied to the ancient feudal system of land ownership. While politicians and oligarchs drove their flushy cars along concrete superhighways, there are still the poor peasants dragging their soiled and bare feet on the path their forefathers had trodden before. And while the elite few squander incessantly their ill-gained wealth in night spots, gambling tables and in lavish and ostentitious parties inside high-walled mansions, there is still the broad masses who are like their ancestors, relentlessly wallowing in hunger and undernourishment due to lack of food when there are many. These similarities in the contradictions of the present and past must certainly be changed or the nation will be drawn into its cataclysmic vortex.

What then, is the proper alternative that would really bring about progressive not retrogressive change? Is it a bloody struggle which had been used before but reaped only lilywhites instead of laurels?

Although it is true that the Philippine Revolution of 1896 that was spearheaded by the greatest Philippine hero was a failure yet, it still remains a crucial fact that struggle is still unfinished. The hundreds of revolts and a revolution which the forebears of present filipinos had

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staged has only one definite goal – that of resuscitating themselves from the mire of oppression and exploitation, which is unfortunately the very same goal of the present revolutionaries. Like the stream of thesis and anti-thesis in Hegel's dialectic, those struggles are yet to produce a synthesis. And, to think that the historical movement of time cannot be stopped and that synthesis of the dialectic will inevitably result, will a climax to the long and perilous strifes eventually come?

The Real Enemy of the Filipino People

The gnawing pains of the masses must of course, be healed. The panacea cannot be in the form of fascistic acts of repression of their legitimate desires for change nor will it be the flimsy promises for change and reforms. The government cannot ask from the people the virtue of a forgiving christian when its shortcomings are over seven times seven. It must act by way of defeating through extermination, the evils plaguing the establishment, of the enemies within them and of disconnecting the strings and ropes that tied it and the people to dipterous monster of neo-colonialism.

The real enemy of the people is certainly not the establishment but it is neo-colonial set-ups plaguing it. What are these neo-colonial set-ups that must be destroyed by the Filipino people? They are the clandestine imperialistic acts of the United States and the feudalistic system they preserved and encouraged. The American bases which are in the Philippines soil not to protect the Filipinos from the "invaders" from Shangrila but to protect vested economic interests and provide magnets to divert a nuclear attack on mainland USA, must be abolished. The feudal system which the Americans perpetuated by means of "Parity rights Agreement" and "Sugar Exportation Quota" must likewise be abolished, or else the government will further debilitate the people's trust and confidence on this so-called "christian society" and "democratic government."

The real enemy of the Filipino people is not the corrupt politicians and poverty, but the factors which had brought about these shortcomings and perversions. The Philippine government must shear-off from its skin the fleece of American

imperialistic influences and abrogate all neo-colonial treaties it has with the United States – the intangible tyrant, before it must endeavor to progressively change the Filipino society. It must not be indifferent to the students' clamor for a true national democracy, for if it will, it would allow itself to be relegated into the dustbin of history by the raging avalanche of change.

EPILOGUE: Will History Repeat Itself?

As pointed out earlier the social conditions and the actuations of the government that brought about the revolution in 1896 or any revolution for that matter are seemingly reprehensible in the present day Philippines. Likewise, the aims of the old revolution heroes are coincidental with those of the student revolutionaries, and as such it is apparent that the present clamor for change are but the continuation of the unfinished struggle of old. The unfading cry of Pugad-Lawin on August 26, 1896 which sought the redress of the smoldering grievances of the people still reverberates clearly into the senses of disenchanted masses ever-reminding and challenging them to assume the unfinished task of revolutionary reforms. The march of time can never be stopped – it is inevitable that the synthesis will have to come, and when it comes – who, among the people, will pass the judgment? The volcano is apparently starting to shake and brewing its smoldering lava to signal the culmination of the Great Struggle of the Filipino people. Will History repeat itself? Will the final day of reckoning come?

USC DANCE TROUPE . . .

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visited Tokyo, just a 30-minute bus ride from Yokohama. It was at this port where our Cebuano hospitality paid off. A group of students and teachers unexpectedly met us there. More than two months ago this same group belonging to a Don Bosco school visited Cebu and were entertained by our dancers at the Boys High gym. They brought us to Tokyo as well as to their high school in a country-side. After presenting few selected dances they were treated to their own unique way of eating, *sukiyaki*.

From Yokohama off to Keelung, Formosa's northern post. Coming along with us for a visit and renewal of visas

were the Tornadoes, a pop group popularly received in Tokyo's nightclubs. Using the most expensive gadgets and instruments they supplied us with the most recent and groovy hits. In between the Lady Birds Combo of San Nicolas Parish, who accompanied our dances, they took turns in presenting the pops.

They were still in doubt whether the management of Philippine President Lines at Taipei had finalized arrangement for a presentation at Fu-Jen University whose College of Natural Sciences and Languages is handled by our SVD Fathers. They had barely finished with our visa check-up when a call was received that Father Arens, a one-time Director of USC Boys High and some student leaders, were already on the way to fetch us. They lunched at their college canteen, an ideal and modern cafeteria our HE people would dream of our new Complex. The SVD-run College was a sprawling campus some 15-minute ride from the city of Taipei and boasting of modern buildings as well as a recently finished 3000-seat gym with stage. Father Arens told us that our program would start at 7:30 p.m.

Brother Gil Aranas, a Bol-anong SVD, assured us to an audience at least the dormitories. He doubted whether students from other College knew about the evening's affair since it was only announced that very morning arrived. We hardly believed that at certain time some 2000 (not 200 as published in the Bulletin and Dailies) of them showed up including the University President, Cardinal Yu-Pin and three rows of faculty members.

It was a performance the dancers won't forget. Three professional stage spotlights were rented and focused in variegated colors on the dancers on the wide enthusiastic applause. And towards the end of the performance, with the versatility, poise, and projection our dancers can be proud of, the Dance of the Glasses (brilliantly interpreted by Cris Barrera and Lorette Manlupig) and the Thinking brought the house down. Such a long standing ovation amid lights and sound was an inexpressible emotion the dancers will always remember, a brief fleeting hour of shining glory that's truly their very own, a moment that makes the trip to Hong Kong and back beyond forgetting.
