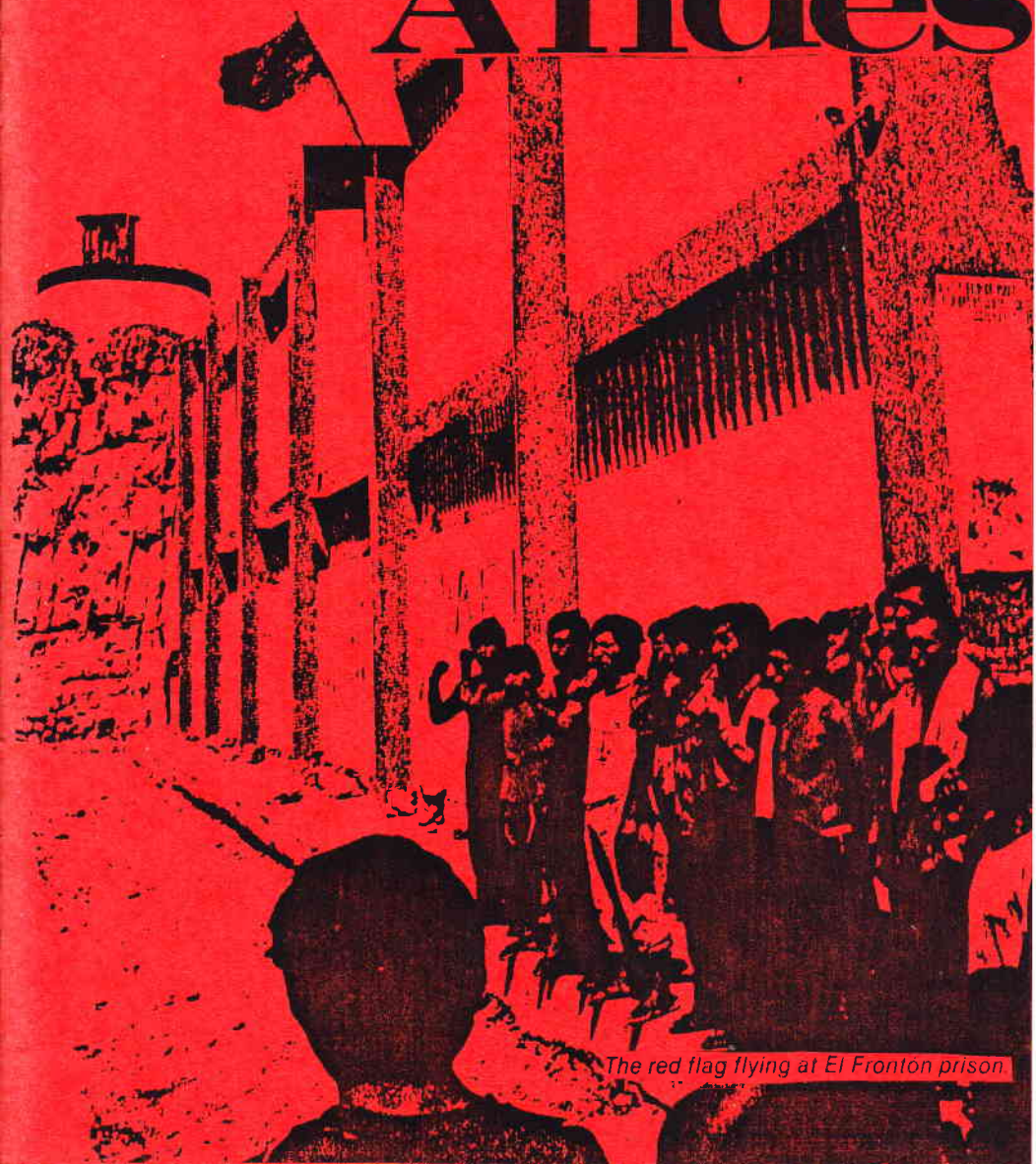


# Fire in the Andes



*The red flag flying at El Frontón prison.*

## FIRE IN THE ANDES:

Selected articles on the revolutionary war in Peru, reprinted from the Revolutionary Worker newspaper

### Contents:

FIRE IN THE ANDES (February 11, 1983)

A Letter about Peru (May 27, 1983)

REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE IN PERU (October 21, 1983)

"TO THE REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS OF THE U.S.!"  
(May 1, 1983)

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# Fire in the Andes

The Andes have caught fire. The high, cold and dry central highlands of Peru, especially the department of Ayacucho, whose capital was once the capital of the Inca empire, are swarming with troops and paramilitary police, invaders from the lowlands who swagger and murder at random, who speak only Spanish and call the Quechua-speaking local people "cholos" (in Peru, "niggers"). But bridges have been blown up, the roads are often impassible anyway, and at 10-12,000 feet the army's choppers fare as poorly as the troops raised and trained at sea level. By day, huge red banners billow from the powerlines along the roads to mock the forces of authority — those powerlines still left standing — and at night huge bonfires of rebellion light up the sky. Nowhere in this region have the armed forces been able to deal decisive blows against the guerrillas. In more than half a dozen rural areas, some 30 or 40 miles long and half again as wide, the local authorities, the landowners, the police and all representatives of the old order have been completely driven out.

This is a peasant uprising on a scale more significant than anything south of the Panama Canal in at least the past decade and more. It is led by the Communist Party of Peru — also known as Sendero Luminoso, which describes these guerrilla zones as the beginnings of revolutionary base areas and seeds of New Democracy, a national and democratic (anti-feudal) revolution.

As the PCP explains in their major manifesto "Develop Guerrilla Warfare," one of only a few of their works now in our hands, their strategy is "nothing less than a peasant war led by the Party, which, making the countryside the armed bastion of the revolution, in the concrete form of base areas, the basis of the new Workers and Peasants State, isolates the reaction and its imperialist masters in the cities, where the proletariat and the masses of people, by setting fire to the soles of the beast's feet, mainly through armed actions in support of the struggle in the countryside, prepare the conditions for the final assault on the cities and the total, complete and thorough overthrow of the reactionary order and of the army that holds it up."

The words "Sendero Luminoso" refer to a phrase by José Carlos Mariátegui, father of Peru's original Communist Party who died in 1930, who called proletarian revolution the "Shining Path" that Peru and the world must follow. In 1964 that party split, as did a great many parties in the wake of the stormy polemics led by Mao Tsetung against Soviet revisionism. Subsequent splits led to the development of what became pro-Teng (Patria Roja) and pro-Albania (Bandera Roja) organizations, now united along with the pro-Soviet forces in a broad electoral coalition with their butts firmly planted in Congressional seats. But some forces who came out of the original CP followed another path. Sendero Luminoso arose in the late 1970s, rooted mainly in Ayacucho and especially the university there, grew more defined in a split with forces who followed the dogmato-revisionism of Enver Hoxha and his attacks on Mao, and in May 1980 launched the armed struggle.

It began in May 1980, with an armed assault on ballot boxes put out for the first general elections held in Peru since the military coup of 1968, an election Sendero Luminoso condemned as a fraud simply meant to reorganize the forms of the dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie and feudal landlords under imperialist domination. Three thousand armed actions have followed since. This is how Sendero describes them:

"Actions which hit hard with agitation and armed propaganda, the taking of radio stations, leaflets, posters and direct action which sows fear among the reactionaries and arouses the enthusiasm of the masses of people with our slogans: 'Armed Struggle,' 'Workers and Peasants Government,' 'Down with the Reactionary Government,' and which show a new world to win in the hammers and sickles which light up the hills and the innumerable red banners which dominate the peaks proclaiming, 'It's Right to Rebel.'" "Sabotage which hits and undermines the economic and social system," referring to fires in imperialist factories, canefields, banks and well-known elite schools, and the blowing up of power lines blacking out Lima and other major cities. "Actions against the

semi-feudal foundations of the state . . . against landlords of both the new and old variety," referring to assaults, crop seizures and the driving out of both the traditional feudal lords and the agents of the state who manage the new state farms organized out of nationalized *haciendas*. "Seizures of towns to draw the masses into the armed struggle." "Solid actions against Yankee imperialism," referring to attacks on the mines and opulent residences of U.S. monopoly capital, an attack against the U.S. Embassy itself in Lima, and attacks on the Chinese Embassy, starting with the hanging from a Lima lamp post of a dead dog labeled Deng Xiaoping, "that Yankee accomplice and sidekick and big traitor to the international communist movement and above all to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism."

These actions were soon followed by more on a much larger scale. In January 1981 the government of Fernando Belaunde Terry announced a major offensive against Sendero, sending in the infamous "Sinchis" — anti-guerrilla forces trained by the U.S. — to reinforce the rural police who were being driven out of their isolated outposts. In October 1981 Belaunde declared a state of emergency in five provinces of the department of Ayacucho, and the army was sent in to operate in an "advisory capacity."

#### War in Ayacucho

Then, in March 1982, came what has been the heaviest direct confrontation of this war, in the city of Ayacucho itself. Two columns of Sendero guerrilla fighters, according to some reports up to 120 men and women, laid siege to the prison at the north end of this city of 80,000. Armed with stolen army weapons, hunting rifles confiscated from rural estates and especially traditional Indian slingshots to hurl explosive charges made from the dynamite that abounds in the mountains, the guerrillas overwhelmed the heavily-armed paramilitary police and blasted their way into the prison. They freed hundreds of prisoners, including a number of revolutionary comrades. Three guerrillas were killed in the assault. In a fit of rage, the police later swept through the city hospital, blasting several suspects in their beds and trying to murder more before hospital personnel finally stopped them. With this incident the political situation in the whole country began to boil. What had been re-

vealed was both the regime's weakness and the bloody claws so newly painted democratic.

Little of this appeared in the U.S. press, although in Latin America it took over the front pages and France's *Le Monde* sent its top Latin American correspondents. A few pictures in the mass daily papers, a couple of articles in the *New York* and *Los Angeles Times* for those in the bourgeoisie's need-to-know categories. A long feature article in the *Wall Street Journal* warned that Sendero Luminoso had won "the allegiance of most of the peasants." A leading legal leftist commentator in Lima complained that even the urban petty bourgeoisie in Ayacucho was infected by "regionalism" and supported the rebellion.

With the assault on Vilcashuaman last August, the situation got even worse for the government. Many police outposts had been abandoned. Vilcashuaman, considered a medium-sized town with 1500 people, is about 60 miles, but a 12-hour drive, from the city of Ayacucho — when the roads aren't blocked by mudslides. An attack was expected. With reinforcements, 70 police crowded into the barracks. President Belaunde himself flew in in April to this symbolic site of a famous Inca city to show his support for the people and especially for the police garrison. But on August 19 a Sendero column launched a furious firefight against the Guardia Civil barracks and overran it. Some paramilitary police escaped, some were executed and the rest were locked in their own jails. During the four hours it held the town, Sendero called a mass meeting in the main plaza: "Without state power, everything else is an illusion," seems to have been the topic. Heeding the warning, landlords, mayors and other local representatives of the central government (landlords are often both) began pouring out of the countryside into the relative safety of Lima and other large cities. In the main guerrilla operation zones, some of those who didn't were tried before the masses and shot. The United Left complained that some of their own people were among those so abruptly losing their positions. Not much has come out about exactly what goes on in these areas described as the embryos of a workers' and peasants' state. But we do know that the central government has complained that Sendero has set up its own government and even

dares to collect taxes, even on the coca crops grown by the peasants which have long been bought up by government-connected gangsters (often elected officials) for the international cocaine trade. And we also know that the legal left has complained that the guerrillas have unfairly played to their public by organizing the trials and executions of rapists and other criminals, who are also often connected with the landlords and the government.

A state of emergency was declared in an area extending through Lima. Three thousand or more people were arrested, including anybody who smelled even vaguely revolutionary. The United Left coalition screamed that Sendero was ruining Peru's return to congressional democracy.

In September, Edith Lagos, whose escape from prison at Ayacucho had been her fifth, was found murdered, cut up by the bayonets of the paramilitary police. At 15, Edith Lagos had led a massive high school student strike in Ayacucho under the auspices of a student federation influenced by Sendero Luminoso. When she was murdered at 19, the authorities called her a leading guerrilla commander in the region. Despite all the intimidation and the danger, the old narrow streets of Ayacucho were completely filled by a funeral procession of 30,000 people, almost half the city's population. It was a number far larger than any of the city's previous famous religious processions, which were far smaller this year.

#### Conflict in Ruling Classes

Throughout the last part of 1982 especially there was fierce infighting in ruling circles. Belaunde, everyone remembered, had called out the army to crush Guevarist guerrillas in 1965, which in turn led to his overthrow by the army three years later. The first five years of military rule had been proclaimed an "anti-imperialist revolution" featuring an enormous growth of state capitalism in industry and especially in the state farms and co-ops which replaced some of the largest haciendas. (According to an analysis by Sendero, the state simply replaced the biggest landowners as the overseer and exploiter of the landless peasants on the big haciendas, and the majority of peasants, with little land, got nothing and continued to exist in semi-feudal conditions.) Such bureaucrat, state capitalism has deep roots in Peru's previous development. It was not really in-

compatible with the overall interests and efforts of U.S. imperialism in the region during that period, although U.S. firms were nationalized (with some compensation). But it was also accompanied by an intense flirtation with the Soviet Union, which provided arms and loans and still maintains a corps of 150 military advisors. France, to a much smaller degree, also hovered over the military junta, seeking advantage and plying it with arms, which probably accounts for the big play Sendero has had in the French press. By 1975, however, the worldwide economic crisis sweeping the imperialist world had hit particularly hard, frustrating the pace of development sought by Peruvian bureaucrat capital. Gen. Velasco, the ostensible "radical," was replaced by Gen. Morales Bermudez, more favored by the openly pro-U.S. comprador elements in Peru. Shortly after, the IMF stepped in to enforce an "austerity" plan as the price of new and desperately needed loans. That "austerity" plan meant a sharp cut in the living standards of the masses (the average wage in Lima seems to have fallen to 60-70% of what it was a decade ago, for that half of the workforce still enjoying full-time employment). At the same time, it also meant an end to the growth of the state enterprises and even some dismantling of the state sector.

The development of this complex situation has above all been directed by its international economic and political-military context. The imperious necessities of international capital, above all that of U.S. imperialism, have required some development and reorganization of the productive forces in Peru, as elsewhere, while at the same time this development has had as one of its consequences the growth of certain sectors of the economy which serve as a base for forces which just might be able to cut a better deal with the Soviets and knock down their more traditional, often private-sector-centered rivals who've long been a mainstay of U.S. political domination. This struggle between these forces within the big bourgeoisie is intertwined with conflicts between the big bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords. Symbolic of the situation's complexity is the fact that Hector Bejar, for instance, one of the leaders of the Guevarist *foco* in 1965, which was destroyed by the armed forces, a few years later became a leading figure in the armed

forces' "anti-imperialist" military regime. Of course what makes this all the more complicated — truly a situation "sin salida" (without exit), as is widely agreed — is the fact that the economic situation has continued to deteriorate, although not in a straight line, and various aspects of the struggle of the masses on a number of fronts have interacted with the contradictions within the ruling classes. This has led to the necessity to dump the military government and institute a "democratic" regime which at best promises to be at least as unstable.

It's easy to see why Belaunde, resurrected from the political dead after twelve years, was extremely reluctant to once again call on the same army that overthrew him last time. Bourgeois political commentators in Lima seemed split over whether the army wanted to be called out or not. Some said the army would like nothing better than to be granted all kinds of special powers and to be given control of whole regions, while others said that the army preferred to wait while the guerrilla movement further undermined the civilian government. The army's intentions were not made clearer, but the political waters were made to boil even hotter, with the public statements by War Minister General Cisneros, who proclaimed that in order to wipe out Sendero the army would have to "kill 60 innocent people for every three guerrillas," and then followed this up by offering a "dialogue" with Sendero.

Just before Christmas, Belaunde fired Cisneros and his whole cabinet. "A coup d'etat," Belaunde declared, "is impossible" — which reassured no one. Although the old cabinet was full of well-known pro-U.S. mummies, the new one stunk even more of that odor, which perhaps was the point. Fernando Schwalb, a long-time ambassador to the U.S. and very popular with U.S. political figures, was brought in as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. A former vice president of the Wells Fargo Bank, which heads up one of the two private banking syndicates supplying the Peruvian government's financial heroin, was made Minister of the Economy and Finance. At the same time, three top military men also got posts. Martial law was declared. Ayacucho and parts of neighboring departments were put under direct army

rule. Two thousand army men were sent in to reinforce a similar number of paramilitary police and other civilian armed forces already running amok in the region.

Shortly after the arrival of the army, there was an incident which has certainly worked to curtail reports coming from Ayacucho. Eight journalists who were traveling in the countryside, including two reporters from *Diario de Marka*, a parliamentary left daily which had nonetheless just run some extremely shocking exposures of how the *Sinchis* had taken to hacking apart living peasant suspects and leaving pieces of their bodies for others to find, were themselves hacked to pieces by what the authorities said were "angry peasants" who "mistook them for guerrillas." (Later it was reported that these peasants, of whatever class they might have been, complained that they were only carrying out police orders.)

#### Current Situation

There is clearly a reign of terror in the countryside. One report, filed before the reports were cut short, tells of a combined forces'sweep through the village of Cuschi, in the province of Cangallo, 85 miles southwest of Ayacucho. Everyone in the village was hauled out of their homes in the middle of the night at gunpoint. Five people were arrested as suspected guerrillas, including a local member of Belaunde's ruling AP party. An old man, a poor peasant, was pushed and kicked into the central plaza where all the inhabitants had been assembled at the point of machineguns. The *Sinchis* tied an explosive charge to the man's belly and blew him apart in front of the whole village. An officer proclaimed, "Look you Indian savages, this is how terrorists die."

Yet Sendero attacks have continued, as far south as Cuzco and Puno, near the Bolivian border, and as far north as Cajamarca, in northern Peru. Near Lima, 267 suspected Senderistas on a prison island began a hunger strike demanding to be treated as prisoners of war. The authorities complained that they couldn't control the area of the prison where these prisoners were concentrated and that the walls and railings were draped with red banners despite the ban on anything red entering the prison. This was not taken as

a sign of Sendero's surrender. Landlords and other petty potentates have continued to stream out of new areas in the departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Ampurjmac.

On January 8, about two weeks after the army moved in, Sendero called for a general strike in Ayacucho. A radio station was "encouraged" to broadcast the call and proclamation — once, before the enraged armed forces shut it down. Then youths with red banners and leaflets were seen moving through the marketplace. According to the Lima press, the general strike left the streets empty of all but the armed forces and their mini-tanks and other armored vehicles. A legal left commentator in Lima rushed to point out that Ayacucho had been shut down a month earlier, before the army arrived, in a general strike called by pro-Deng Xiaoping forces, and that last August the whole country was rocked by general strikes of construction workers, bank employees, railroad workers, electrical workers and waiters, until these strikes were halted by the government-declared state of emergency in the wake of Sendero's offensives. The point of this legal left commentator was that the various revisionist forces have had considerable influence among these sections of the workers, and

he was trying to pit that influence among Peru's sizable working class against the fact that at this time, the main support for Sendero is among extremely poor, Quechua-speaking peasants who are a minority of Peru's 18 million people. There is a very sharp strategic question of how to spread the struggle that has broken out in the most backward part of the country to other areas, but nothing in this revisionist's argument holds out much hope for the political stability so dear to revisionism and imperialism and so hated among very broad sections of the Peruvian masses.

It is the instability and complexity of Peru's situation and its international context which has been so key in the development of the situation to this point, and those very complex factors make major questions of political line all the more key for the further development of this struggle and its revolutionary content. The old order is being rocked in a way that has little recent precedent, not only in terms of the scale of the rebellion but also the sweep of its targets. The revolutionary flames are burning very brightly and reaching high, their light shining brightly in a region where the spectre of "Maoist revolutionaries" was supposed to have been long buried. □

# About Peru

Dear RW,

I am writing in response to your call for reports on internationalist actions this past May Day, and to inform your readers about events that seem to me to be of some significance.

El Frontón is an island prison just off the coast of Peru. It is there that many of the "suspected terrorists" of the Sendero Luminoso are being held. They have been sent to this infamous "concentration camp" to isolate them and, at the very least, to break their spirit. Yet here the spirit of internationalism is particularly strong and defiant. The red flag flies there day and night. The walls — as can be seen from a photo (below) that appeared in the Peruvian magazine in mid-May — are filled with calls to celebrate International Workers Day. To the horror of the Peruvian bourgeoisie, and most certainly their imperialist masters, El Frontón has become a "mixture of popular school, military training camp and liberated zone." The revolutionary unity and high morale of the prisoners has been unbreakable despite intense harassment, including the cutting off of food and water, violent assaults (19 prisoners have been shot in the past several months) and murder. In early May, 2 prisoners, Américo Solórzano Rojas and Angel Botonero Alvarado were gunned down by prison guards. This can only be interpreted as an intensification of the nationwide campaign of repression against the growing revolutionary forces led by the Sendero. In response to the murder, the prisoners held a revolutionary vigil in the prison which they decked out with red banners and flags for the occasion.

What happened as a result four days later in Lima was just as remarkable and inspiring. For those readers not familiar with the situation, it must be understood that some regions in Peru are near a state of civil war. In January the Peruvian government and armed forces launched its biggest offensive

yet against Sendero Luminoso and the revolutionary forces they lead in the mountainous region of Central Peru. Along with this they have conducted an international political campaign of lies and outrageous slanders, which has appeared mainly in the Latin press and in the Spanish language press in the U.S., aimed at isolating the revolutionaries. Recently the press has been filled with boasts from military commanders and reactionary politicians about how the guerrillas are in retreat, near defeat, etc.

On May 13, Sendero Luminoso, which has openly declared war on the Peruvian government and "all reaction," and has taken credit for several thousand armed actions such as the seizure of landed estates, assaults on prisons, the seizure of radio stations, the blowing up of the Kennedy statue and the hanging of dogs in honor of revisionist traitors like Deng Xiaoping, led an open demonstration on the streets of Lima for the first time! A thousand people, many dressed in red, carried the coffins of the brothers murdered at El Frontón which were draped in red flags with yellow hammers and sickles, through the streets of Lima. With red flags and banners flying, they sang the Internationale "a todo pulmón" — as loudly and defiantly as they could.

The "audacity" of the march definitely caught the bourgeoisie by surprise. They tried to counter it by saying it was an act of desperation to keep up "sagging morale" in the revolutionary ranks.

More likely it represented a very significant advance for the revolutionary forces which have continued to gain strength overall in spite of a furious repression. It was also a very bold move to strike against one of the bourgeoisie's main tactics, their attempt to isolate the revolutionaries and spread despair among the revolutionary masses. . . .

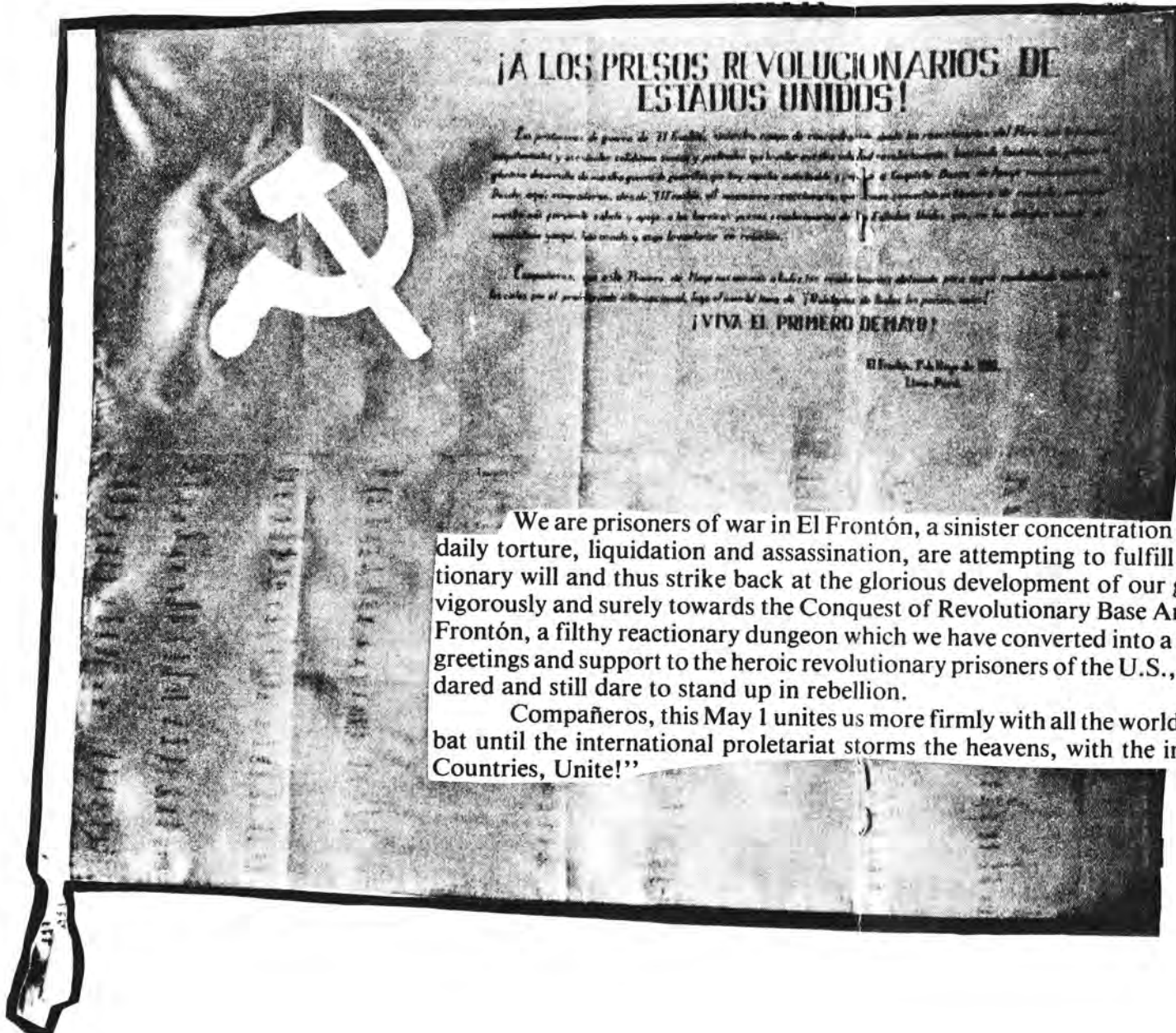
a reader



*The Ayacucho jail — or what was left of it — after the attack by guerrillas of Sendero Luminoso, who reportedly relied especially on homemade explosives launched from traditional Indian slings. 250 prisoners were freed.*

## Flaming Red Banner From Revolutionary Prisoners In Peru

# “To the Revolutionary Prisoners of the U.S.!”

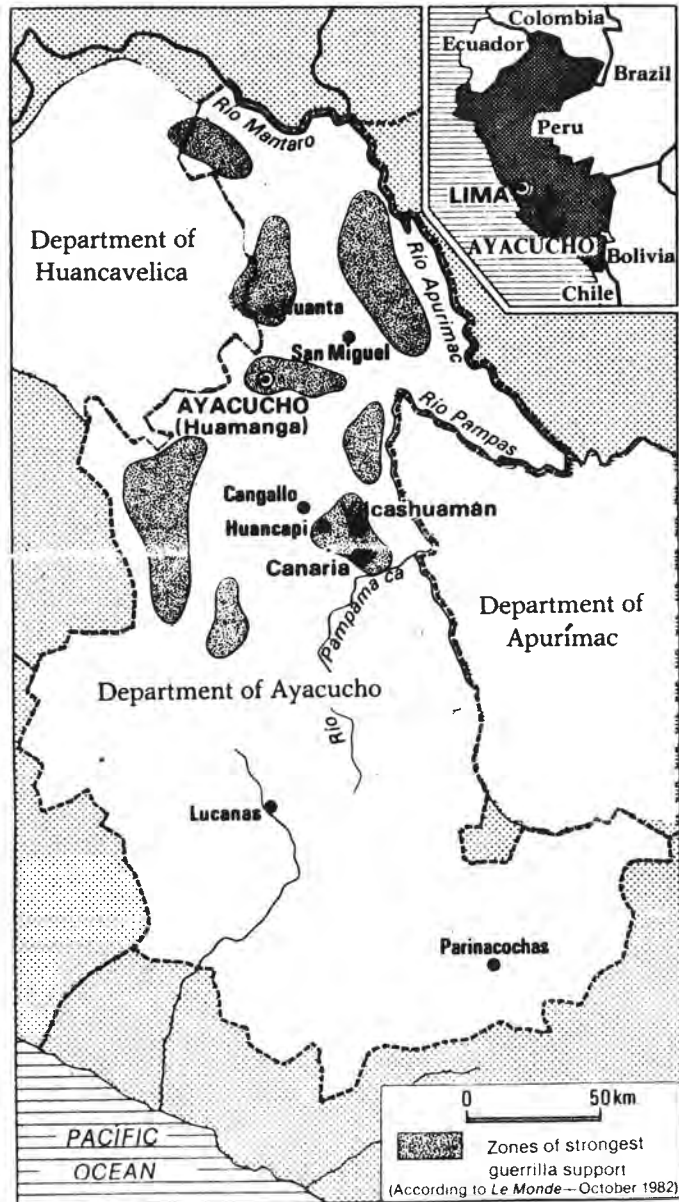


We are prisoners of war in El Frontón, a sinister concentration camp where Peru's reactionaries, with daily torture, liquidation and assassination, are attempting to fulfill their dreams of breaking our revolutionary will and thus strike back at the glorious development of our guerrilla war which today is marching vigorously and surely towards the Conquest of Revolutionary Base Areas. From here, compañeros, from El Frontón, a filthy reactionary dungeon which we have converted into a frontline trench, we send our warmest greetings and support to the heroic revolutionary prisoners of the U.S., who right in the belly of the beast have dared and still dare to stand up in rebellion.

Compañeros, this May 1 unites us more firmly with all the world's revolutionaries, to continue in combat until the international proletariat storms the heavens, with the immortal slogan, "Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!"

Long Live May Day!  
El Frontón, May 1, 1983  
Lima, Peru

# Revolutionary Warfare in Peru



The Communist Party of Peru — known as Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path in the bourgeois press — is waging a revolutionary war to liberate that country and serve the world proletarian revolution. This is a most welcome development and one which should be enthusiastically supported, particularly by those of us who live in the homeland of the Peruvian people's main oppressor, U.S. imperialism.

The war these comrades have been leading for over three years, a war which has increasingly drawn in the masses and opposed an ever greater number of enemy troops, is a rare and important thing in today's world. In theory and practice, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) has upheld Marxism in its qualitative development up through Mao, an ideology whose name has been dragged through deep mud by all kinds of capitulators, especially since Mao's death and the counterrevolutionary coup in China. They have made important changes on the political map of Peru and Latin America. The giant bonfires shining on the highest Andean peaks and on the hills overlooking the capital itself and the giant red banners these fires illuminate — symbols of the armed struggle and the revolutionary line that guides it — can be seen by the exploited and oppressed throughout the world. This revolutionary war and its line are also important in counterpoint to the guerrilla movements in Central America, where pro-Soviet revisionists and even somewhat pro-U.S. elements have taken up arms to serve reactionary imperialist interests and promulgate the line — powerfully refuted by these Peruvian comrades — that no oppressed people can liberate themselves without the agreement of one or another imperialism. Any serious struggle against imperialism must be supported, especially one aimed at the imperialist power whose belly we live in; but all the more refreshing, all the more invigorating, all the more welcome is the news of these "Maoist guerrillas."

Of course the "news" about Peru as presented by the imperialists and their

flunkies has been all "bad," with nothing good to say about the Communist Party of Peru and the struggle it is leading. On this point, Mao Tsetung wrote, "It is good if we are attacked by the enemy, since it proves that we have drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves. It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black and without a single virtue; it demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves but achieved a great deal in our work." Certainly these revolutionaries have achieved a great deal. We should have a two-sided attitude towards the lies and slanders reactionaries have hurled at them; on the one hand we must welcome these attacks and on the other we must refute and oppose them.

Particularly disgusting are the crocodile tears about "violence" and bloodshed in Peru. In addition to the long-standing, all-too-"ordinary" violence of imperialist domination and rampant semifeudal conditions which for the majority, if they're lucky, mean death of old age in their forties, the armed forces and *Sinchi* counter-insurgency police troops have killed over a thousand people in Peru so far this year alone, according to Amnesty International. Murder by gunfire, bayonet and crucifixion, beating, torture, rape and every kind of abuse imaginable have been used to terrorize the masses and drive them away from the revolutionary fighters. The vast majority of those killed have been murdered outright and not killed in armed encounters. Even the government admits that in the countryside the armed forces don't often take prisoners. . . they just kill them. Yet some who like to pose as "people of good will" have the nerve to condemn the revolutionaries for the violence, or, in what amounts to the same thing, to pretend to stand equally opposed to "senseless" revolutionary violence and counter-revolutionary violence.

What is happening in Peru is not a dinner party. It is the early stages of a war between revolution and counterrevolution,

taking place in diverse locations around the country and centered in the countryside. The revolutionaries and their army have to confront and defeat the reactionary armed forces who represent the ruling classes and imperialism; and because every revolutionary struggle is a class struggle there is also a war between the various classes and their supporters. This means that the revolutionaries must also confront and deal with local small-time reactionaries, bullies and spies, and with paramilitary bands, especially those organized by the armed forces from among landlords and rich peasants and their supporters, retired military personnel and lumpen hirelings. When these paramilitary reactionary bands slaughter civilians or ambush guerrillas, the armed forces report it as a massacre committed by revolutionaries (or sometimes incidents of this kind are reported as "the people" attacking the revolutionaries), and when the revolutionaries confront and defeat these counterrevolutionaries, that too is reported as a slaughter by the revolutionaries.

A few exposures of the crimes committed by the authorities have escaped into circulation because of the lethal contention between rival elements within the Peruvian ruling classes — especially between the pro-Soviet forces centered in the army, and pro-U.S. forces grouped around civilian President Belaúnde. For instance, the revisionist press in Peru has concentrated some fire on the presidentially-appointed general in charge of antiguerrilla operations and on the presidentially-controlled *Sinchis*, but not on the armed forces as a whole despite the direct role played by all the armed forces in the repression. In situations of this kind the Soviets have been known, as one of their tactics, to try to influence or try to capitalize on the actions of revolutionary groups. It is very important that the PCP has taken a firm stand opposed to the Soviets and their agents. The interaction of all these different contradictions is another reason why there are frequent reports in the U.S. and European press indicating concern about the situation in Peru, even at this relatively early stage of the struggle.

### Legal "Left" vs. Armed Struggle

One thing that all the authorities in and out of power in Peru agree on is that the PCP should not have launched the armed struggle. Reactionaries in power simply declare that it is wrong to rebel. The legal "left" in Peru and revisionists and legality-loving "Marxists" abroad say what amounts to the same thing, but clothe it in shabby "Marxism": they voice the contention that they support rebellion in general and simply oppose this one in particular.

A very good example of this is provided by Horacio Zeballos, a leader of the pro-Deng Xiaoping Patria Roja and spokesman for the Izquierda Unida (United Left) coalition which embraces revisionists of all stripes, including the pro-Soviet forces. Zeballos used his seat in Peru's parliament to denounce the PCP and to demand the formation of a provisional government in Ayacucho, the department most affected by the guerrilla war — a government made up of "a cross-section of trade union forces of Ayacucho, people from the government and parliamentarians of that region (where the IU has some seats — *RI*) to pacify and rehabilitate that convulsed zone. . . Sendero would be excluded. Obviously those who are against pacification can't be in the government." When the interviewer from *Oiga* (the pro-government magazine where this interview appeared) asked Zeballos why, then, he had his picture taken carrying a rifle when he ran for president in 1980, he replied, "Strategically we are for a qualitative change in our society through confronting the owners of Peru and the only way out is the practice of armed revolution. This is a universal law proven in China, in Nicaragua. . . (But) Sendero Luminoso is a premature movement. They don't understand that the time is not ripe for confronting the reactionary bourgeois state which is stronger in terms of the relations of forces and which can obviously liquidate the embryonic revolutionary movement we have initiated in our country."

Evidently, as long as there is some bourgeois democracy, even if it's the

thinnest and most patently ridiculous variety that prevails in the countries dominated by imperialism, even if it consists of no more than a few parliamentary seats allotted to revisionists while the broad masses suffer under the most backward social relations and open government terror, then it is forbidden to make revolution. This opportunist's yak-yak about the "relations of forces" is absurd because the government is always stronger than the revolutionary forces at the beginning of the revolution.

It is revealing that this revisionist — and many others, including in the U.S. — considers it fine to wage armed struggle today in Central America, and wrong today in Peru. Why? Is it because the armed struggle in Central America, unlike in Peru, is being subordinated to imperialist interests, led not towards the objective of the revolutionary seizure of political power and the thorough transformation of social relations but rather an "historic compromise" coalition government between pro-Soviet and pro-Western forces? Is that why revisionists think it's OK to have armed struggle in El Salvador, for instance, but not in Peru where revisionism still has a few hopes for parliament and where Soviet guns have found willing hands in the Army? Can it be that the Zeballoses of this world consider the only good armed struggle one that imperialism has its hooks in? For the oppressed, are the only alternatives to open reaction either revisionist guerrilla war or revisionist social pacifism? The clarity of this parliamentary cretin's words and the fact that this false alternative has been so widely promulgated make it all the more clear what a contribution the PCP is making to the world revolution by opposing this revisionism with the weapons of criticism and the criticism of weapons.

Even in a backward country there is a social base for opportunists whose future is predicated on imperialist domination, but there is a potentially far more vast social base for a revolutionary movement under the leadership of the proletariat and its party. Right now the opportunists can count on some votes and run a few unions. But the PCP is mobilizing poor peasants, who make up the huge majority in the countryside, and basic strata of the proletariat in armed struggle, to change

the "relations of forces" guns in hand and "confront the reactionary bourgeois state" once and for all, and on that basis, together with the growing crisis in Peru, attracting growing support from other strata as well. To quote Marxism about the inevitability of the revolutionary overthrow of the state while failing to make that the central object of the proletariat's efforts is worthless and despicable.

The document *Basic Principles for the Unity of Marxist-Leninists and for the Line of the International Communist Movement*, written by leaders of the RCP of Chile and the RCP, USA, points out that: "While in the imperialist countries it is a general rule that it is only after a fairly long period of development of the objective and subjective conditions that the armed struggle becomes the main form of struggle — and then it must be carried out first in the form of mass insurrection in the cities — and while further it is the case that before then the armed struggle is not usually the major form of struggle, in the colonial and dependent countries it is more generally and more frequently the case that there is both the possibility and the necessity to wage armed struggle as a major form of struggle well before the time that nationwide political power can be won, and in some circumstances it is both possible and necessary to make the armed struggle the main form of struggle for a fairly protracted period leading up to the winning of nationwide political power." This is a basic strategic question. *Basic Principles* continues, "In sum, whether or under what conditions the armed struggle should proceed from the countryside to the cities or the other way around must be determined by concrete analysis, study and summation of experience. But in all cases the proletarian party should conduct its work and develop the mass struggle with the concrete aim of taking up armed struggle as the main form of struggle at the earliest possible time. . . ."

This does not mean that it is *always* possible to launch the armed struggle in the oppressed nations, nor still less to develop it fully to the point of countrywide seizure of power. Those questions, as is said, must be concretely analyzed. Our party holds that "in the imperialist era developments in any one



country—are more determined by contradictions in the international arena than by contradictions internal to that country,” to quote our most recent Central Committee report, and we’ve linked this “with our analysis of the historic conjuncture and the need to prepare especially for the qualitative sharpening of all the contradictions on a world scale.” But this also does not mean that conditions for revolution, and still less conditions for launching the armed struggle and for making that the principal form of struggle, can *only* exist during such a moment of historic conjuncture or in conjunction with the interimperialist world war whose looming shadow is the sharpest expression of that all-around imperialist crisis. In fact, while the world arena has included revolutionary situations in particular countries even in comparatively peaceful times, today the development of revolutionary situations to one degree or another in a number of countries heralds the approach of a period of perhaps unprecedented opportunities on a world scale, including in the imperialist countries where such opportunities come more rarely than in the oppressed nations.

The armed struggle being waged by the Peruvian comrades is correct and right on time. It was preceded by a period of political preparations, including most importantly the rebuilding of the party itself which had been torn apart by opportunism. There is every indication that the repercussions of the imperialist economic crisis, which are particularly severe in Peru, the contention between the two imperialist blocs which is splitting Peru’s ruling classes, and the overall political situation which all this has led to, have created a ripening situation for revolution. Basing themselves on the strategy of protracted people’s war, these comrades have established and developed guerrilla zones and aim to further develop the struggle to create revolutionary base areas and an embryonic workers’ and peasants’ new-democratic state in the countryside. The Peruvian revolution still has important problems to solve and will face twists and turns. Our party has emphasized not only that revolutions involve twists and turns but has also focused on Mao’s formulation, made in regard to the Chinese Revolution, of the necessi-

ty to struggle in such a way as to be “hastening or awaiting changes in the international situation and the internal collapse of the enemy.” Today’s armed struggle in Peru, even though the seizure of nationwide political power is not immediately possible, is the only way to accumulate fundamental revolutionary strength so as to hasten and prepare for the day when that does become possible. Further, this armed struggle in Peru also makes a contribution to preparing for and hastening revolutionary advances on a world scale.

#### False Charges of Nationalism

Another hypocritical slander hurled at the PCP is that these comrades are guided by nationalism, either of the Peruvian or neo-Inca variety. For instance, linked to this charge of nationalism is the accusation that they are “Pol Potists.” Without either accepting the imperialist slanders about communist massacres that this reference is meant to evoke or summing up Pol Pot here, it should be pointed out that the PCP criticizes the Kampuchean communists for very grave nationalist deviations in supporting the counterrevolutionary coup in China and in dissolving the Kampuchean communist party with the excuse of thus strengthening the armed struggle and the united front.

When PCP fighters hung a dead dog in front of the Chinese embassy in Lima in “honor” of Deng Xiaoping, some people complained that by utilizing this traditional Indian form of denouncing a traitor the PCP was somehow trying to appeal to “Indian messianism” and revive the ancient Inca empire, and at the same time they complained that the PCP was taking “foreign” and “incomprehensible” issues to the masses. Really, gentlemen, you can’t have it both ways.

The PCP is not nationalist; it is proletarian internationalist. In their manifesto “Develop Guerrilla Warfare!” they affirm, “We practice the great principle of self-reliance; we are also firm followers of proletarian internationalism, unfurling the immortal call of Marx and Engels, ‘Workers of all countries, Unite!’; and as communists we always raise up high the three great banners of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, which demands of us that we be irrec-

oncilable enemies of revisionism and all forms of opportunism, and fighting for revolution in our own country we serve the world proletarian revolution which is being waged and will be waged until communism shines over the whole earth.” These comrades paid close attention to the class struggle in China, taking a firm stand on the dividing line question of upholding Mao’s line against the revisionist onslaught that unleashed a crisis in the international communist movement after Mao’s death and the coup in China. They have supported Chiang Ching and Mao’s other followers now being persecuted by China’s new rulers. Such questions may be “foreign,” but they have been taken up by proletarians and broad numbers of poor peasants as well as by many others in the most remote regions of the Andes, in the capital and throughout Peru. Speaking of political work of this kind among peasants, the *New York Times* writes, “Is it senseless to ask if they received indoctrination willingly or unwillingly, since they had no choice but to support, or at least coexist with, those who had assumed the real power?” More than senseless, it is a lie, bourgeois gentlemen, for your class still holds state power in Peru, despite the powerful revolutionary challenge, and if terror could win the allegiance of the masses of peasants, then the state, with its thousands of soldiers and their U.S. and Soviet advisors and weapons, could certainly win their hearts and minds and isolate the revolutionaries. Instead, the revolutionary armed struggle has grown in strength and vigor in the course of three years of warfare.

#### Important Questions

We have said these comrades are Marxist-Leninists. But even within the ranks of those who base themselves on Marxism-Leninism and Mao’s Thought there are, of course, crucial political questions which will continue to be discussed and struggled out among revolutionaries in the course of common struggle. The comrades of the PCP, projecting onto a global scale a formulation used by Mao in regard to the phases of people’s war in a national liberation movement, characterize the world situation as one in which “we are entering the strategic of-

ensive of the world revolution.” What exactly are the implications of this is something we have to further investigate. But it seems to be an expression of a conception of the development of the world revolution as proceeding in a more or less straight-line way through the victory of revolution in one country after another, rather than a view of imperialism as an integrated world system whose development — and the development of whose opposite, revolution in the two basic kinds of countries, imperialist and oppressed — proceeds through spirals marked by nodal points of all the world’s contradictions when great dangers to advances already made and great opportunities for further advances both present themselves.

These comrades link their analysis of “the strategic offensive of the world revolution” to their insistence on using the formulation “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism,” or “Maoism” for short, as opposed to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. They characterize Maoism as the third stage of Marxism (after Marxism and Marxism-Leninism). Here again it remains to be elaborated exactly what the implications of this formulation are. Our party has stressed the importance of upholding Mao as a dividing line. The revisionists’ attacks on his line have been a major theoretical expression of capitulation to imperialism and abandonment of Marxism-Leninism. We have stressed the importance of learning from and advancing on the basis of Mao’s qualitative advances in that science, which represent, in that sense, a new stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism. In short, we think Maoism is fine and necessary. But as Mao himself emphasized, we are still living in the era of Leninism, of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Without a Leninist understanding of imperialism and revolution, Maoism is ultimately distorted and turned into its opposite.\*

These significant questions of political and ideological line must be put in the larger context of proletarian internationalism and our common goals as Marxist-Leninists. The armed struggle being led by these comrades has a special importance within the context of the views on the world situation we have em-

phasized, for it is guided by a revolutionary communist line and is serving as a blazing manifesto to the oppressed people of the world and can have a powerful impact on the outcome in the clash between imperialist war and revolution.

The PCP is leading a just and correct struggle which especially in today's world must be supported by everyone who hates imperialism and revisionism and welcomes the flames of revolution. [ ]

\*It is difficult to have a full appreciation of the PCP's views because they have issued few publications since the beginning of the armed struggle in May 1980. The most important of their recent documents is the pamphlet "Develop Guerrilla Warfare!," illegally printed and circulated in the hundreds of thousands throughout Peru last year in a bright red edition; it analyzes the situation and points to the basic road for the development of the Peruvian revolution.

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*A dead dog hung on a Lima lamp post near the Chinese Embassy. The sign around the dog's neck reads, "Deng Xiaoping."*