

The Cuba Question

On May 10, 2002, a Cuban engineer, Oswaldo Paya, delivered to the island's Parliament about 11,000 signatures in support of a petition for a referendum that, in essence, intends to alter the single-party political system and some aspects of the economic and social spheres. The petition is known internationally as the Varela Project, named after a 19th century Cuban patriotic priest.

Soon after the petition, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter visited Cuba and, in a speech broadcasted over the official media, highly praised the project. On May 20, in Miami, American President Bush dictated the Cuban government to carry out a policy change in a menacing tone; he also resolutely promoted the Varela project even though he was unaware who Father Varela was in Cuba's history.

To respond, the Cuban government mobilized mass demonstrations and marches to make the existing legislation "untouchable". The National Assembly of People's Power declared the socialism system "irrevocable," and stated that Cuba would not return to Capitalism. Some Cuban official scholars were interviewed to criticize the project "not viable" [1]. They pointed out some "technical-legal" points of view, such as the following: "in accordance with the Bylaws of the National Assembly of the People's Power approved in 1996, each of the 10,000 signatures needs to be authenticated by a notary public before the project can be submitted."

Perhaps this is the first experience for Cuban people, but other peoples living under single-party system, including especially Chinese people, have experienced exactly the same bitter process.

In theory, there is no logical connection between single-party system and Socialism.

In practice, single-party system is a special form in the very early stage of Socialism developed from the special situation in Russia mostly by Lenin and his Bolshevist comrades. It is the essence of the so-called "Leninism," which, in theory, still governs China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba. [2]

While single-party system had its historical origin and function in the countries to install the system, it is at a deadlock today. When Gorbachev had to drop Communist Party's ruling status from Soviet Union's constitution, the Soviet Union began to dissolve. When Deng Xiaoping refused to change Communist Party's ruling status over constitution, the Chinese Communist Party was finally hijacked by a small ruling circle which represents, first of all, "the most advanced productive force" (Western multinational capitalists). [3]

The worst case of single-party system is certainly North Korea, which in fact has nothing at all to do with Socialism. Hundreds of thousand people are fleeing to China from a decade-long famine. Its final collapse (how and when) depends on how China utilizes the Korean card against American and Japanese imperialism.

The failed history of 20 century Socialist movement has proved that single-party system with its cancer – one-man dictatorship – eventually will bury the revolutionary results, usually after that one man died. Washington's request of removing Castro (and his brother Raul) is not the excuse for the Castro regime to stay at power. The bitter Cold-war history told us that the Imperialist powers won because they used the right names, such as human rights and democracy, not because these names are wrong.

Cuba still has chance to defend the true revolution. Fidel Castro still has chance not to betray the revolution he promised to Cuban people before he took power. To make this chance a reality, all progressive forces all over the world should be mobilized to support the Varela Project, to help the Cuban people, including Castro himself, to abandon its single-party system.

Notes

[1]. These descriptions are cited from Manuel Alberto Ramy <mar@enet.cu>, "Don't be Confused by the 'Varela Project'" distributed in the meeting "A Day in Solidarity with Cuba" July 21, 2002, UFCW Union Hall, San Jose, California. The author also thanks other activists in the meeting to provide information for better understanding of Cuba supporters in the U.S.

[2]. Bevin Chu bevinchu@yahoo.com from Taiwan also observed: "One would be amiss not to mention that the Leninist single party system is alive and well on allegedly free and democratic Taiwan. The DPP and TSU are typical Leninist political parties, modeled as they are after the KMT, a Leninist party. Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian were both high ranking KMT officials whose political education was Leninist in character. But more fundamentally both Lee and Chen possess the mindset and temperament of Leninist authoritarians all by themselves, so it isn't just the KMT's fault. The significance of Chen's recent assumption of the DPP's party chairmanship -- after he swore he would maintain the separation of government and party upon his election should be clear enough for anyone."

[3]. This is the essence of what the current Jiang Zemin regime is promoting for.

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