

Stalin's continuing relevance to the proletarian revolution and national liberation



Central Committee
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The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines congratulates the Partito dei CARC (Carc Party), Resistenza Popolare Milano (Popular Resistance Milan) and Associazione Stalin (Stalin Association) for organizing this conference-debate about “The Lessons of Stalin's Work for the Struggle of Communists Today.” We extend revolutionary solidarity to all the participants of this international conference. We look forward to the discussions and debates with the ardent wish that these will lead to higher levels of unity and understanding among Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations.

Since its founding until today, the CPP has always given deep value to Stalin's major contributions to Marxism-Leninism on a vast range of domains—from the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism, the critique of capitalism and imperialism, to proletarian strategy and tactics, proletarian dictatorship and socialist construction, party-building, and military science. He also made significant theoretical and practical contributions to the national question, including elaborations on the right of nations to self-determination as first enunciated by Lenin, as well as linguistics and other cultural questions. He fought tirelessly against Trotskyist distortion of Marxism-Leninism.

Stalin's main contributions to building socialism and fighting imperialism

Stalin led the CPSU in upholding and expounding Leninism, its defense and further elaboration as a qualitative advance of Marxist theory and practice in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. His role was especially critical in his time, since Lenin's death signaled a series of serious attempts, such as by Trotskyites and social-democrats, to dilute the most basic lessons of proletarian revolution, socialist construction, and Bolshevik party principles.

Stalin persevered in the work of building socialism in one country (with the Soviet Union becoming the first socialist country), in the context of correctly applying the principles of proletarian internationalism. He led in striking the correct relationship between building and defending the socialist system under the proletarian state while at the same time supporting or promoting revolutionary movements in other countries.

Like Lenin and others in the CPSU, Stalin recognized that while the revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries ebbed, flowed, and ebbed again, through the 1920s-30s, the national liberation movements and large-scale agrarian revolutions surged forward in the oppressed countries of “the East” (Asia) and the southern continents of Africa and Latin America. He made sure that the Soviet Union, through the Comintern, through the CPSU-supported University of the Toilers of the East, and other internationalist channels, provided support to these anti-colonial or anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, and incipient working-class movements. This is indicative of why so many pioneering communists of Asia in the 1920s-30s, for example, regarded Stalin in the highest esteem.

A most educational summary of Stalin’s exposition of Leninism may be found in *Problems of Leninism*, a selection of his important post-1917 writings, especially his Sverdlov University lectures “Foundations of Leninism”. The CPP is proud to say that Stalin’s “Foundations” was among its first cadre educational materials in the early 1970s, with its underground Central Publishing House reprinting the booklet by mimeo machine and other rudimentary methods and translating it into Filipino to make sure that the fundamentals of Leninism are disseminated down to basic-level cadres.

Stalin’s direct role and overall influence in advancing ML especially with regards building socialism in the Soviet Union, practicing proletarian internationalism, extending concrete support for revolutionary work in other countries, are likewise clearly discernible in the *History of the CPSU (Short Course)* and other published documents of the CPSU in the 1920s-1940s period, in historical accounts of his leading role throughout this period of socialist construction and the Great Patriotic War (World War II), and in Comintern documents.

Mao Zedong evaluated Stalin as being “70% correct, 30% wrong”, underscoring the great achievements of the Soviet Union during Stalin’s leadership, while recognizing his shortcomings. In the CPP’s documents, including Armando Liwanag’s *Stand for Socialism against Modern Revisionism*, whenever criticisms of Stalin’s errors and shortcomings were mentioned, we made sure to evaluate him in the same 70-30 fashion, and in the spirit of upholding his valuable contributions and learning from mistakes. His weaknesses and errors are viewed not merely as individual limitations and errors, but in the context of the historical limitations of the CPSU and objective conditions of Soviet Union as a whole, being the vanguard of the international proletariat in socialist revolution and construction.

Having said that, we hope that this conference can also find the opportunity to consider the works of Mao especially in his theory and practice of combatting revisionism and capitalist restoration, and in continuing the class struggle and building socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We recognize the focus topics for the PCARC-organized conference and we would like to contribute additional viewpoints that we think need to be addressed.

Stalin’s works as applied to the current era of imperialism and proletarian revolution

In expounding and defending Leninism throughout his political life, through his writings and his rich practical experience, and in exercising steel-sharp leadership as head of the CPSU and Soviet state for almost 30 years—with such influence extending to many other working-class parties of the world—Stalin made immeasurable contributions to the theory and practice of ML that today’s proletarian-led revolutionary movements continue to find valuable and inspiring.

Steadfast communists do not turn defensive when the reactionaries, reformists and counterrevolutionaries attempt to taint them with the “Stalinist” tag. They are fully aware of how the the imperialist disinformation machine has turned the anti-Stalin diatribes of Kruschov into a mountain of lies. At the same time, they turn to serious study to draw valuable lessons, both achievements and mistakes, from Stalin and his generation of communists. And that is what we must all continue to do: defend and build on Stalin’s positive contributions, while learning from the negative lessons as well.

In the semicolonial and other backward countries where the worst forms of national and social oppression persist, fighting imperialism and feudalism together with their bureaucrat-capitalist minions remains the main task of the proletariat and people. National liberation movements must take the character of a people’s democratic (new-democratic, or national-democratic) revolution, only after winning which shall the socialist revolution proceed.

In these countries, the socio-economic crisis is chronic and ever-worsening, together with the brutal reality of local armed tyrannies, brittle democratic facades, and outright fascist dictatorships or other forms of open terrorist rule supported by imperialism.

Here, the teeming basic masses of workers and peasants seek urgent radical change even in spontaneous ways. Arousing, organizing, and mobilizing them according to the principles of the mass line do not need to wait for a “crisis situation” to develop before they will turn to revolution as their only hope for system change—because there already exists a revolutionary situation due to the chronic and worsening crisis.

But it remains an uphill battle to arouse, organize and mobilize the masses if the subjective forces for revolution—namely, the proletarian party and its solid fighting organizations—don’t exist, or are still weak and small against the overweening imperialist and local-reactionary forces, or have been debilitated by long and unresolved internal errors and major recurrent shortcomings. Even those armed revolutionary movements that have attained many victories and moved to higher stages must continue to guard against ultra-Leftism, Rightism, and other errors that can hobble their sustained advance, or cause setbacks and reversals.

This brings us to the question of revolution in the heartlands of imperialism and in other advanced capitalist countries, especially on the question of the existence of a revolutionary situation, and on the revolutionary tasks appropriate to that situation. The CPP cannot pretend to know more than the parties and comrades that have been waging revolutionary work in these countries for many years and decades. We only express the determination to listen to and learn from their sharing and discussion sessions during this event and in other appropriate forums, and add our own insights from common Marxist-Leninist theory and practice wherever appropriate. We also reiterate our invitation for the other parties and comrades to likewise read through our own papers on the international situation and tasks, including those of our founding chair Jose Maria Sison.

During the onset of World War I, and again that of World War II, intensifying inter-imperialist rivalries, military flashpoints (including among their proxies), fueled by intense global economic crises, have produced such impacts that they led to wars of unprecedented destruction that shook the whole world and its big bourgeoisie and other oppressive classes.

At the same time, they have produced a generalized revolutionary situation especially in countries where the proletariat and people were poised for a general advance while the ruling classes, in Lenin's words, were "at loggerheads" with each other. Particularly in World War II, the rise of fascism was effectively met by a global anti-fascist united front promoted by the Third Communist Internationale, which hastened the battle for democracy and the victory of socialism in more countries of Europe and Asia.

Today, we anticipate a similar *movement in the direction of a global mass upsurge*, towards a generalized revolutionary situation. We have been feeling, in recent years, the warning tremors of a similar global earthquake. Like the movement of tectonic plates, the intensifying contradictions of monopoly capitalism are bringing great conflicts to the surface. The laws of motion of imperialist capitalism are an objective reality that we should not deny and disregard. Rather, the proletariat and peoples should steel themselves to confront this looming reality and turn it into a worldwide advance and massive revolutionary victories.

Much of the world is again in such a critical conjuncture of growing factors for war and revolutionary crisis. These factors and flashpoints are now directly affecting the imperialist powers themselves, their most reliable capitalist allies and client states, and other frontline states that are being sucked into the conflict.

We have seen how the intense US-backed Zionist war in Palestine, which is spreading to the nearby countries of the Middle East, have elicited an enormous groundswell of mass protests throughout the world supporting the Palestinian people's just demand for national self-determination and denouncing imperialist terrorism. The war in Ukraine is also producing extreme policy dilemmas and political conflicts within EU countries, NATO itself. These issues have resulted in the growing polarization within the US big bourgeoisie as underscored by the brawling presidential race. Finally, we see the same growing factors for war in Asia, with the US imperialists stoking flashpoints in and around Taiwan and the South China Sea boundary disputes.

Stalin's leadership of the CPSU and the Soviet state in analyzing and dealing with the complex world situation and explosive issues from the mid-1920s, through the turbulent 1930s all the way to the global anti-fascist struggle and World War II certainly provides us guidance on how to analyze the equally complicated world situation today, and how to take advantage of great opportunities and deal as well with hindrances and other problems. Like we said, the key is in strengthening the subjective forces.

We believe that there is enough basis for international initiatives—as there were during the 1920s and 1930s until the different dynamics of war took over—in developing the capacity of the proletariat and people for mass campaigns and struggles responding to the economic crisis, to fight for socio-economic rights, to assert democratic rights and resist fascist onslaughts, to link all these into a more sustained global anti-imperialist and anti-war movement, and amidst all these, to build and strengthen the proletarian core forces for revolution. These tasks are both urgent and sustainable in the coming years.

In the context of the multipolar world situation in the 21st century, Stalin's work becomes even more important as more countries assert their independence, fight for liberation and the proletariat and the rest of the people wage revolution. The masses, faced with escalating misery stemming from overlapping economic, environmental and social crises are increasingly embracing revolutionary aspirations and seek genuine societal change under the leadership of the working class. In response, US

imperialism, its allies and its local agents are escalating their attacks to maintain control. This underscores the need for the proletarian leadership to forge a path to national and social liberation.

In this context, Stalin's emphasis on the broad united front against imperialism becomes even more so relevant. The increasing number of anti-imperialist countries asserting their independence, and the rise of national and social liberation movements demonstrate the necessity of building a robust, all-encompassing anti-imperialist united front. Stalin's leadership, and his calls for the unity of oppressed countries and workers against the forces of imperialism, are as relevant as ever. Stalin advocated for the formation of alliances that included not only workers and peasants but also other progressive and anti-imperialist forces to consolidate strength against the common enemy, to promote national liberation movements, to protect the Soviet Union from the threat of US imperialism. Stalin viewed this broad anti-imperialist united front as essential to weaken imperialist influence and advance socialism through the correct application of proletarian internationalism.

There is however another enormous difference between the global situation during Stalin's era (from the mid-1920s to his death in 1953): today we cannot confidently rely on, or even assert that there exists, a powerful bulwark of a socialist state like the Soviet Union or an even bigger socialist camp like in the early post-World War II years. The international proletariat has suffered major defeats following modern revisionist betrayal and capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China.

While there is no equivalent today of the Comintern, communist parties, pre-party formations and various Marxist-Leninist groups conduct gatherings, conferences, and other events, as well as bilateral or multilateral meetings, which all contribute to the ideological and political consolidation of the revolutionary proletariat. There are also anti-imperialist and anti-fascist united front formations and channels in which proletarian revolutionary forces are at the core. We must continue to build, strengthen, and maximize such *existing platforms and channels for mutual exchanges, coordination and support*.

Consistent with the Leninist principles of upholding nations' right to self-determination while pushing for internal democratic reforms, especially empowering the peasantry through agrarian revolution, Stalin led the CPSU and the Soviet state and also enjoined the Comintern to support states that showed significant degrees of advancing these principles. A case in point is the Soviet support for China's Guomindang (Kuomintang or KMT) under Sun Yatsen in the early years of the CCP, and for the two CCP-KMT united front periods (from 1921 to 1927, and again from 1936 to 1947).

In the current era, we can likewise see similarities of the proletarian movement exploring unities with and support for certain *countries that are assertive of their independence* against imperialist dictates and intervention, such as the DPRK, Cuba and Venezuela—to name a few. We would be interested to participate in the discussions during this conference on how proletarian parties must view other countries that offer themselves as counter-poles to US imperialism, such as those in the BRICS bloc.

We have so far presented our ideas of how Stalin's elucidation of Leninist theory and principles remain applicable in the current era, with due regard to specific types of countries such as semicolonial or backward countries, imperialist or advanced capitalist countries, and those states that resist imperialism and assert their national independence to some degree.

However, we would like to impart additional focus on the role of *Marxist-Leninist propaganda and*

organization, Stalin's succinct explication of *Bolshevik strategy and tactics* (in his *Foundations of Leninism*), and the closely related *principle of mass line* as elucidated by Mao. All these, we believe, must be addressed inter-relatedly within the framework of strengthening the subjective forces and their links with the masses—a most urgent need given the fast-developing global crisis situation.

Finally, we would like the participants of this conference to consider further exploring certain quantitative or incrementally qualitative changes in the conditions of the international working class vis-a-vis the recurrent global capitalist crisis and developments in the political economy of imperialism. These changes are not fundamental in the sense that they negate the basic conclusions of Marx and Lenin (and likewise Stalin and Mao) on the proletariat as the grave-digger of capitalism and the proletarian party as providing class leadership.

But these changes do mean that today's working-class parties face the many challenges in developing tactics and methods of work for effectively reaching, arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the proletarian masses, who are mainly concentrated in traditional manufacturing industries, but also those distributed in all kinds of production and service industries, including state-owned corporations and facilities, and dispersed in so-called outsourcing firms, "independent contractors," or online/gig platforms and so on. They are the masses of semi-proletarians, other subsectors of the proletariat, agricultural workers, and migrant workers.

The CPP gives special attention to migrant workers, not only because they comprise a sizeable percentage of the Philippine labor force working outside its borders, but also they represent a big bulk of the country's overseas diaspora which in so many ways makes them even more open to embracing revolutionary ideas and movements—as proven as early as during the Spanish-colonial and US-colonial periods.

The question of migrant peoples and migrant labor in fact reopens an old angle of proletarian internationalism that was already there in the First International, during the 1871 Paris Commune, and as confronted on a daily basis by Communists in exile or working abroad (from Marx and Engels, to Lenin, to Zhou Enlai and Ho Chi Minh, down to Joma Sison and others).

This reality is that of workers of all nationalities in specific countries—here in Europe for example—finding themselves under one common proletarian flag in its most mundane meaning. The workers that we reach, organize and radicalize as such are able to grasp the spirit of proletarian internationalism in the most practical sense as they observe trade-union unity and political solidarity with co-workers of other nationalities, while garnering support for their home countries' national liberation movements.

Conclusion and recommended calls to action

In the spirit of the teachings of Stalin and his leadership during the Second inter-imperialist war, we reiterate the following calls:

- 1) Build, strengthen and consolidate proletarian class leadership through their vanguard party by assiduously studying and applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism on concrete conditions in their countries and striking deep roots among the working class and toiling masses.
- 2) Strengthen international consultation and dialogue between proletarian revolutionary parties to share experiences of revolutionary work and forge practical plans for cooperation, and mutual assistance and support.

- 3) Build the broadest united front to expose, oppose and demand an end to all imperialist wars, and to oppose the rise of fascism and neofascism, and resist its attacks against the working class. These alliances can be formal or informal, temporary or long-term and can be built on the basis of issue-specific demands.
- 4) Accelerate the overthrow of the reactionary state of the ruling exploiting classes by taking advantage of the political and socioeconomic crisis conditions engendered by wars.
- 5) Wage revolutionary armed resistance in the form of protracted people's wars for national and social liberation or conduct preparations for armed insurrections as determined by specific conditions in each country.
- 6) Build the organized strength of the broad masses of workers and peasants, intellectuals and other democratic forces by building factory unions, community associations and all other forms of organizations. Amid the crisis made worse by imperialist crises and wars, carry out strikes and other mass struggles in defense of class and democratic interests.

In closing, the CPP extends its deepest gratitude to the organizers of this important conference for their efforts in bringing together revolutionaries and comrades from around the world. Your commitment to the struggle for liberation and to build the proletarian leadership is truly inspiring. As we proceed with the discussions, let us carry forward the ideas and plans forged here, and continue to build stronger movements for national and social liberation. The CPP wishes this conference great success and look forward to points of agreement that will arise from our collective work. #