

Philippine Stalinists try to cover their tracks after promoting Navalny

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The Stalinist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has provided another illustration of its opportunist politics on the international arena. Having issued a statement on January 24 that glorified the opposition protests in Russia, but had nothing to say about the far-right character of their leader Alexei Navalny, the CPP's chief information officer posted an "amended version" just over a week later. It was published on February 4 "to more clearly define the nature of the Russian oppositionist Navalny and to present the challenges to the communist forces in Russia."

Not mentioned is the fact that the *World Socialist Web Site* posted an article in the intervening period, on January 31, drawing attention to the CPP's tacit backing for the pro-Western Navalny and the connection to its manoeuvres in the Philippines. The WSWWS said the CPP "supports Navalny precisely because it is lining up with sections of the ruling class most closely aligned with US imperialism, represented by Vice-President Leni Robredo and her Liberal Party."

The Philippine Maoists did an abrupt about-face. The "amended version" discovered that Navalny did indeed enjoy "the support of some big oligarchs in Russia, as well as the open endorsement of the US government." He "is, in fact, an advocate of neoliberal ideas ... [and] has also promoted Russian nationalism and anti-immigrant views." At the same time, the January 24 exhortation to the Philippines masses to follow the example of the pro-Navalny protests was edited out.

It is, of course, permissible for a political party to make a principled correction. But principled politics are completely alien to the CPP and Stalinism more generally. Theirs are the methods of slander and, when that fails to intimidate, physical violence. Their character assassination of academic Joseph Scalice for meticulously documenting the CPP's support for the installation of the fascist Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is just one

recent case in point.

No explanation, let alone an examination, of how the CPP wound up alongside Navalny, has been provided. Rather the old Stalinist method of rewriting the textbooks and burning the old ones is employed. Moreover, it is so much easier with electronic forms of communication—a tap on the keyboard and the original statement is consigned to oblivion. It is now deeply buried in the CPP's website!

More importantly, however, the new "amended version" of the statement is just as politically revealing as the original. The original parroted Navalny's line that "the Russian masses... are fed up with the corruption of the Russian bureaucrats under Putin." The new statement has discovered that working class discontent in Russia is driven by worsening social conditions and police-state repression. It also makes the discovery that "the anti-Putin Russian bourgeoisie wants the Russian people to rally around Navalny."

This situation, the CPP intones, "challenges the revolutionary proletarian forces to provide political leadership to the working class and people." The communists, it continues, must teach the working class "to grasp the fact that their conditions are bound to further deteriorate whether Putin perpetuates his dictatorship or is replaced by another representative of the bourgeoisie. The communist forces must build their own political strength and raise their capability in mobilizing the Russian workers to march back along the path of socialist revolution."

This claptrap is nothing but r-r-revolutionary window-dressing to divert attention from its previous dalliance with Navalny. The CPP holds to none of the above talk of fighting for socialism, least of all in the Philippines where it has opportunistically engaged in promoting one bourgeois political figure after another as representing the "progressive bourgeoisie." Most recently that was

Duterte, who the CPP now denounces as a fascist dictator, even as it seeks ties with another—Robredo and her Liberal Party. As a proponent of the disastrous Stalinist two-stage theory, the CPP specifically insists that Philippine workers should not march along the path of socialist revolution, but must subordinate themselves to the supposedly progressive bourgeoisie. The CPP relegates the struggle for socialism to the indefinite future.

As for Russian workers, they are left to wonder who exactly are the “communists” to which the CPP refers. The CPP and its founder Jose Maria Sison are devotees of Joseph Stalin and his Chinese counterpart Mao Zedong, both of whom based themselves on the reactionary nationalist ideology of “Socialism in One Country,” and persecuted genuine communists, above all the Trotskyists who adhered to socialist internationalism.

After the Moscow Stalinist regime dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union fragmented. What all the fragments have in common is the promotion of Russian nationalism and xenophobia, a pro-capitalist agenda and sordid manoeuvring with the various factions of the Russian bourgeoisie—much as the CPP does in the Philippines. In the 2019 Moscow Council election, for instance, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), which defends all the crimes of Stalin, enjoyed the support of the right-wing “liberal” Navalny, who called on his supporters to “vote smart” to try to block Putin’s United Russia party.

It is in these foetid political waters that the CPP has been fishing. In the past, Sison has occasionally shared material from Gennady Zyuganov, general secretary of the KPRF. In 2017, the CPP also heavily promoted Irina Malenko, a leading member of a Russian-North Korean Friendship group and author of books defending Stalin that the CPP has touted. She is notorious for an anti-Semitic article published shortly after the 9/11 attacks in the US, claiming that 4,000 Jews skipped work at the World Trade Centre on that day. *Pravda* later pulled the article and apologised.

More fundamentally, the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and also China is a devastating indictment of Stalinism as whole. The CPP offers no explanation—or rather no Marxist explanation—of events that have had terrible consequences for the working class in Russia, China and internationally. It dates capitalist restoration in Russia to the 1950s—that is, after the death of Stalin—ignoring the fact that the gains of the Russian Revolution, nationalised property relations and the planned economy, remained, even though disfigured by

Stalinism. The CPP dates capitalist restoration in China from the death of Mao—ignoring the fact that Mao had laid the basis for it through his rapprochement with US imperialism in 1972, which the CPP absurdly hailed at the time as a “proletarian foreign policy.”

To claim that such a fundamental shift in the economic base of society can be explained simply by the death of an individual, no matter how central, has nothing to do with Marxism. In the final analysis, capitalism restoration in both the Soviet Union and China was the consequence of the economic dead-end brought about by the perspective of “Socialism in One Country” and the accompanying suppression of the working class and genuine Marxism, represented by the Trotskyists. These shut-in autarchic economies were completely undermined by the globalisation of production from the late 1970s. Having rejected socialist internationalism, the Stalinist bureaucracies embraced global capitalism.

The CPP has no use for Marxism, which provides the scientific basis for the working class to fight for world socialist revolution. Insofar as it demagogically mouths Marxist-sounding phrases, it is to dupe the working class and justify its ever-shifting alliances with factions of the ruling class that have always proven catastrophic for working people. The new amended edition of the CPP’s statement on the pro-Navalny protests in Russia is simply another demonstration of its political bankruptcy.

Anyone serious about revolutionary Marxist politics will only find a way forward by studying the lessons of struggles against Stalinism by the Trotskyist movement, represented today by the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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