

Support historian Joseph Scalice against Stalinist slanders by CPP founder Jose Maria Sison!

Peter Symonds
24 August 2020

In a vicious and menacing slander posted on Facebook on August 18, Jose Maria Sison, the founder and ideological leader of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has attacked Joseph Scalice, a leading scholar of Philippine history, as a “pathologically rabid anti-communist and CIA psywar agent posing as an academic Trotskyite.”

Sison’s extraordinary outburst was in response to the announcement that Scalice will deliver an online lecture on August 26 hosted by Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, where he is a postdoctoral researcher. The lecture will “explore the historical parallels” between the CPP’s support for fascistic Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016 and the “endorsement of the Marcos dictatorship by an earlier Communist Party.”

Scalice, who is fluent in Tagalog and has a Ph.D. in Southeast Asian Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, is widely known and respected as a scholar in the United States and in South East Asia. His Ph.D. thesis on the CPP’s history has attracted a significant interest in the Philippines, where workers and youth, as well as academics, are seeking to understand the underlying roots of the CPP’s repeated betrayals. Scalice has contributed essays on Philippine history, politics and social conditions to the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Utterly incapable of defending the CPP’s political role, Sison reprises his long personal involvement in Stalinist and Maoist denunciations, threats and violence in branding Scalice as an agent of US imperialism. He denounces the “futile attempts” of “Trotskyites” to blame the CPP and its front organisations for “the rise to power and current criminal rule of the traitorous,

tyrannical, genocidal, plundering and swindling Duterte regime.”

It is a matter of record, well known in the Philippines, that the CPP and its front organisations supported the fascistic Duterte when he won the presidency in 2016 and staged rallies in his support. On the occasion of Duterte’s first State of the Nation address, BAYAN, the CPP’s umbrella front group, staged a rally of nearly 40,000 people and invited Duterte’s newly appointed chief of police, Ronald dela Rosa, to address it. The CPP’s youth front, Anakbayan, welcomed Duterte’s speech as “a breath of fresh air.”

Several prominent figures nominated by the CPP accepted posts in Duterte’s administration. These included leaders from two organisations tied to the political line of the CPP. Rafael Mariano, the longtime head of the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KMP) peasant organisation, was put in charge of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). Joel Maglungosod, vice president for Mindanao of the trade union umbrella organisation Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), was made undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Far from breaking from Duterte as he launched his “war on drugs,” the CPP welcomed the campaign of extrajudicial killings directed at the most oppressed layers of the population, and, in its official newspaper, *Ang Bayan*, called on the “revolutionary forces” to cooperate with it. The war on drugs became a campaign of mass murder in which over 30,000 people have been killed in the past four years by police and paramilitary forces.

Scalice in his writings has not only documented the repeated betrayals of the CPP and its various

breakaway organisations, but explained that they are rooted in the reactionary nationalist ideology of Stalinism and its Maoist variant. Its perspective of the “two-stage theory” declares that in countries with a belated capitalist development, such as the Philippines, socialism is off the agenda and the working class and peasant masses have to support the “progressive wing” of the bourgeoisie.

In the Philippines, the Stalinist Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) claimed that Ferdinand Marcos represented the progressive layers of the bourgeoisie. It backed him to win the presidency in 1965 and worked to subordinate workers and peasants to Marcos as he prepared to assume dictatorial powers through the declaration of martial law in 1972.

Sison was a member of the PKP youth wing who was expelled from the party in 1967 and founded the CPP in 1968. While Sison opposed the pro-Moscow PKP, neither he nor the CPP ever reexamined the theoretical roots of the PKP’s treachery or broke from Stalinism. He propagated a Maoist version of the two-stage theory that was responsible for painting one or another faction of the bourgeoisie as “progressive,” right up to the point when, having stabilised its rule with the CPP’s assistance, the ruling class turned on its allies and working people.

The “traitorous, tyrannical, genocidal, plundering and swindling Duterte regime” is just the latest in a series of Philippine governments helped into power by the CPP and/or rival Stalinist parties.

The menacing threat contained in Sison’s libelous attack on Scalice must be taken seriously. Sison and the CPP have a long record of physical violence and murder against their political opponents, including dissident members of their own party. His denunciation of “Trotskyites” recalls the slanders of Stalin and his gangster regime, which murdered an entire generation of revolutionaries in the purges of the 1930s, culminating in the assassination of Leon Trotsky in August 1940.

We call on our readers to oppose Sison’s slander against Joseph Scalice. Statements of opposition should be posted and circulated on social media. The WSWS also urges the widest attendance at the lecture that will be delivered on Wednesday (click here to register). We have been informed that more than 1,000 people in the Philippines and throughout Asia have already

registered. Dr. Scalice has also received principled support from academics.

The CPP no longer commands the respect and support of broad layers of working people in the Philippines that it did in the 1970s and 1980s. It has fragmented into rival parties that compete with each other to ally with one or another faction of the Philippine bourgeoisie in return for crumbs of privilege and power. But the stultifying legacy of Stalinism and Maoism remains, not only in the Philippines but throughout the region.

Scalice’s lecture will provide an introduction to workers, youth and intellectuals who want to understand the reasons behind the CPP’s betrayals and are looking for a political perspective upon which to base the struggle against authoritarianism in the Philippines.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)