

“A history that the working class has a right to know and must learn”

Statements from the Philippines, Australia, Japan and South Korea defend Dr. Joseph Scalice against Stalinist slanders

Our reporters
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The World Socialist Web Site is publishing messages of support for Dr. Joseph Scalice from readers throughout the world. Dr. Scalice who has come under attack from the Philippine Stalinists for his powerful lecture, “First as Tragedy, Second as Farce: Marcos, Duterte and the Communist Parties of the Philippines,” which examined the support given by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the various organizations that follow its political line, to authoritarian Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016.

Acutely sensitive to the criticism of the CPP, its founder Jose Maria Sison, without a shred of evidence, has denounced Dr. Scalice as a paid CIA agent and an informer for Duterte. Dr. Scalice, through the establishment of the historical record about the betrayals of the CPP, has done a service to the working class in the Philippines and internationally.

We urge our readers to come to the defence of Dr. Scalice, including by sending statements of support to the WSWs opposing the slanderous attack on him by the CPP and sharing his lecture widely.

Jose Bolima Remillan, poet/writer from the Philippines:

Joma Sison’s refusal to rebut intelligently the thesis raised by Dr. Scalice proves that the greatest doctrinal nemesis of the CPP is no longer US imperialism, but the very crisis at the core of his Party’s leadership.

Sanjay, a student:

Joseph Scalice’s works provide a precise historical background on one of the parts of Filipino history. As a

young student, it is great to be told that such events exist without being stained by any political agenda.

Josh Makalintal, student and writer from the Philippines:

Joseph Scalice’s recent lecture on the treacherous and traitorous history of the Philippine (national-democratic) Left is highly essential, and progressive movements in those circles must reflect more on his important scholarship because unless they genuinely come to terms with such historical truth, they will continue to dig their own grave deep towards long-lasting marginalization. But sadly and predictably, Jose Maria Sison’s absurd anti-intellectual attacks against Scalice reek of ignorance and denial. The militant Left deserves better—and it can do better by finally breaking away from Sison’s deceptive influence.

Sam, a member of the Socialist Student Movement, a group of high school students in Brisbane, Australia:

The Socialist Student Movement unequivocally condemns the smear campaign of the Communist Party of the Philippines against historian and academic Joseph Scalice. In his lecture, “First as Tragedy, Second as Farce,” Scalice clearly outlines the failings of the CPP which stemmed from them aligning with the supposedly progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie. Their support of President Duterte, a fascist who has led a campaign of violence and oppression against the working class, is indefensible. The CPP has not only betrayed the people they claim to represent but also their own members, who thought they were fighting for a world free from capitalist exploitation. Scalice, by exposing the CPP,

has done a service to the whole anti-capitalist movement and we stand in complete solidarity with him.

A teacher in South Korea:

I would like to state my unequivocal support for Dr. Joseph Scalice and his scholarship on the Stalinist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) against the slanderous attacks of Jose Maria Sison and his supporters. The meticulous research Joseph has conducted is not only of significance for the working class and youth in the Philippines, but for all throughout Asia and internationally. His work thoroughly exposes the rotten roles of Stalinism and Maoism and the manner in which their proponents like Sison betrayed and subordinated workers to their respective bourgeoisies—and continue to do so today.

This is a history that the working class has a right to know and must learn in order to fight for its political independence, for international socialism, and genuine workers' democracy. That Sison and the Philippine Stalinists have reacted to Joseph's August 26 lecture in the scurrilous and even juvenile manner they have only testifies to their fear that Joseph's work will reach a broad audience.

Furthermore, I have the pleasure of knowing Joseph personally, having his assistance when I was a graduate student, and I can say without hesitation that he is a man of serious political principle and devotion to the international working class. Sison's lie that Joseph is a "CIA agent" is an insult to the intelligence of workers and young people. I encourage all to study Joseph's August 26 lecture on the CPP.

Mirko, a WSWS supporter in Japan:

I would like to speak up in defense of historian Joseph Scalice. I have heard his lecture last month, as well as the connected dishonest attacks on him by Joma Sison, the head of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Having taken some time to review the record of both sides, it is clear to me that any impartial and honest observer would have no choice but to see that it is Scalice who has invested time and effort to patiently analyze, document and present the CPP history, while Sison is engaged in unprincipled and self-serving mudslinging, evasions, distortions, libel and even threats.

To the working class, the question of access to truthful accounting of its history, and free and principled debate concerning that history and political responsibility of various parties, factions and leaderships, is of critical importance, and not simply in an opportunist fashion, while they are the oppressed class, struggling for

emancipation. It is equally, if not more important, even after that class is victorious in taking political and state power, as the only possible bulwark against betrayals by its leadership and possible degeneration.

We must remember that Stalin and the clique around him initiated their attacks on Trotsky just as he was trying to establish a truthful accounting of the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, contrasting that debacle to the experience of the Russian October revolution of 1917.

But the Stalinists could not allow Trotsky to present his "Lessons of October," nor debate him in a principled manner on the historical and political record. Just like Sison now, they had to resort to lies and distortions. And as Trotsky warned so early on, what starts with falsifying the historical record, inevitably slips step by step to violence and the physical extermination of principled political opponents, whom the Stalinist cannot allow to stay alive and continue reminding the working class of just what had taken place, and why.

That is exactly where the slander and calumny by Joma Sison and present day Stalinists objectively lead to as well. That much is clear from the experience the working class has had with Stalinism internationally, over the past almost one century now. That is why it is vital for every class and historically conscious person to defend Scalice, and more broadly, the right by academics and the general public to access, research, present and debate this and any other subject matter freely. If we allow Scalice and others like him to be silenced and intimidated, the next steps on the slippery slope are the jackboots, the bayonets and the gulags.



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