

Historian Joseph Scalice responds to Stalinist Sison's foul imagery

Joseph Scalice
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Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison and his supporters are continuing their foul attacks on historian Joseph Scalice following his lecture "First as Tragedy, Second as Farce: Marcos, Duterte and the Communist Parties of the Philippines." The lecture established on the basis of overwhelming evidence that Sison and the CPP had actively assisted the fascistic President Rodrigo Duterte to come to power in 2016 and gave support to his murderous "war on drugs."

The latest in Sison's vicious campaign, drawing on the long history of Stalinist lies and threats, is a photoshopped image depicting Scalice and Leon Trotsky as rats about to be killed by an angry peasant. The WSWWS is posting below Dr. Scalice's response to Sison's crude methods posted on his Facebook page. We encourage our readers to send us letters defending Dr. Scalice.

Jose Maria Sison, founder and ideological leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has posted yet another attack on "Trotskyites," accompanied by a caricatured image of Trotsky and me as vermin. An angry peasant, wearing a traditional salakot hat, holds two rats, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Scalice, in his hands and knocks their heads together. It is a disgusting image.

Sison is dredging up some of the worst filth of the twentieth century. The bestial depiction of Leon Trotsky has its origins in the anti-semitism of the far right. The White Russian emigres first responsible for these depictions served as the ideological inspirations of Nazism. Stalin embraced this vicious heritage and ensured that images of Trotsky, the demon Jew, found wide circulation.

Stalinism has a long history of using barbaric and racist imagery against its Marxist opponents in the

Trotskyist movement. The flagrant lies told by the Stalinist leaders to cover up their betrayals of the working class and secure their hold on power were given visual form in the grotesque imagery which they employed in their art.

Anyone who has made a careful study of the imagery employed by the CPP will recognize its dishonest and frankly barbaric character.

Looking to cover up their complicity in his rise to power, the CPP has produced effigies of Duterte that are beyond grotesque. The man they hailed as progressive is now depicted as a demonic beast, complete with slaver fangs and horns and blood-red rolls of gratuitous fat. There is no class depicted, nothing at all that references capitalism, just the pure embodiment of evil. It is a measure of their political desperation that the CPP is drawing on the propaganda of the far right and the medieval bestiary.

In the same fashion, as the CPP and the organizations that follow its political line have aligned with sections of the bourgeoisie closely tied to Washington, they have begun denouncing Duterte as a puppet of "Chinese imperialism," and have produced images that draw on the region's long history of anti-Chinese racism.

The statement that accompanied the image of Trotsky and me as vermin was written for Sison by the so-called MLM Study Group. It is as fundamentally dishonest as the artwork.

Sison refuses to deal with any of the basic historical facts raised by my scholarship. Instead he regurgitates the historical lies of Stalinism. The statement claims that Trotsky supported the Nazis, that Trotsky opposed the peasants, and on and on.

Any politically literate student of the twentieth century should know the origin of these lies. There

were countless little compendia of such poisonous falsehoods published around the time of the Moscow show trials. They served as a kind of Stalinist breviary, shoring up the political line of the party with lies and justifying the mass murder of their opponents.

I am a historian. I wrote a thousand-page dissertation that examined for the first time every extant scrap of what the party wrote in the late 1960s and early 1970s—books, pamphlets, leaflets, and fliers—and collated these into a coherent account of events leading up to the imposition of martial law.

Sison has responded to none of this. He cannot account for his support for Macapagal, whom he hailed as a revolutionary; for his endorsement of Marcos in 1965; for his alliance with the elite opposition from 1970-72 as they sought to secure the reins of martial law for themselves; or for his support for Duterte in 2016.

Instead, he resorts to slanders and threats and lies and bestial caricatures in a desperate attempt to cover up his own political culpability.



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